LORD OF THE MYSTERIES

by Cuttlefish That Loves Diving

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LORD OF THE MYSTERIES

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- BOOK 2 -

-AUTHOR-
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[Atlas Studios (Webnovel)]

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CHAPTER 101
UNEXPECTED CLUE

Howes Street, Divination Club.

Klein pressed down on his half top hat and walked along the stairway towards the main door.

He wasn't dressed in his usual formal wear. Today, he was wearing a white shirt and a light-colored vest, paired with a thin black windbreaker, making him look more spirited than he had before.

This set of clothing was more suitable for combat and had only cost him one pound, including the fee for the small pocket that he had sewn into the vest. Compared to the suit he had purchased, it was so cheap that it brought tears to his eyes.

He stroked the revolver in his holster, as well as the metal bottles in his tiny inner pocket. Klein then took out the portrait and entered the Divination Club.

Without any surprise, he met the beautiful attendant, Angelica.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. I thought you would come only a few days later." Angelica was taken aback at first before she immediately revealed a brilliant smile.

Klein took off his hat and sighed.

"Good afternoon, Miss Angelica. I had a dream at noon. I dreamed about Mr. Hanass Vincent and matters regarding him. You know that, as a fortune-

teller, I absolutely cannot overlook any dream. It could be a revelation from the divine."

Confused by his charlatan-like words, Angelica nodded in thought and asked out of curiosity, "What did you dream of?"

"I saw Hanass Vincent arguing with someone." Klein passed her the folded piece of paper in his hand.

As Angelica unfolded the portrait, he pinched his glabella and observed the color of her emotions.

"This person…" Angelica looked at the realistic portrait and slipped into deep thought.

Klein saw her emotions turn into a 'thinking blue', a normal reaction.

"This person…" Angelica muttered once again. She slowly looked up and said, "I've met him before."

Klein's mind whirled as he immediately asked, "When was it?"

"I can't remember the exact date. Maybe a month ago? I saw him send Mr. Vincent to the door and they were softly discussing something. I have a deep impression of him because of his thick and messy eyebrows, as well as Mr. Vincent's rare smile," Angelica described as she recalled. "Yes, he had a pair of grayish-blue eyes and, like most men his age, had little hair on his head."

"Did you meet him again before or after that?" asked Klein gently.

Angelica shook her head.

"No, I am certain of that. I don't even know his name. To be honest, if it wasn't you, I would have suspected that any person showing me a portrait

like this is a policeman investigating Mr. Vincent's death. Heh, I don't find it odd no matter what revelation you receive, for you are a true Seer."

My apologies, I am a policeman… Klein retorted silently as he sighed and said, "A true Seer would understand how minuscule he truly is compared to the vastness of fate. We can only see a hazy corner, forever receiving revelations, but never answers. We must reflect upon them constantly and keep up our respect and fear. We must decipher these hints with caution and not see ourselves as the intelligent ones who have taken control of fate."

By summarizing what he had figured out over the past few weeks, Klein suddenly realized that his Spirit Vision turned clearer. He could even faintly make out the details within Angelica's aura.

At that instant, he felt like a shortsighted man who was wearing glasses that suited him.

This… has my Seer potion begun to produce clear signs of digestion? Klein was stunned in disbelief.

"I never imagined that a Seer like you can still maintain such fear and respect towards fate. It's truly admirable," said Angelica earnestly.

She had seen too many people in the Divination Club who claimed to see through the truth and change fate after learning a few divination methods.

Klein retracted his gaze and chuckled.

"The more you know, the better you can understand how small we truly are."

As he was saying this, he checked his body's condition and reflected on his past experiences. He could basically narrow the essence of the 'acting' technique to 'actions corresponding to the name of the potion, understanding the hidden laws governing the role, as well as strictly abiding by these laws'.

Only by doing so could he change the state of his body, heart, and soul, making them closer to the remnant psyche in the potion, so as to gradually digest it.

The acknowledgment of a Seer's identity was only a factor on the surface. The reason why it made one's spirituality feel light had to do with how the feedback strengthened one's affirmation of particular divination actions. And these actions collectively formed the rules for digesting the Seer potion.

To help others interpret revelations and guide them in a better direction; yet constantly maintain one's fear and respect towards fate. One cannot be too egoistical, too proud, or blindly believe one's interpretations… These are the laws I can think of for the time being, as well as the essence of the 'acting' technique that will guide me towards the future. If it continues to be this successful, I won't need half a year. Perhaps in two or three months, or even two to three weeks time, I'll be ready to completely digest the potion.

… That sign was extremely obvious. It's no wonder the mysterious Mr. Zaratul said that the Beyonder will clearly sense it when the potion is fully digested. There's no need for anyone to teach them. It is what it is… Just like now, although my Spirit Vision has been enhanced a little, I know very well that this is only a pit stop in the digestion process and not the final destination.

With this in mind, Klein couldn't help but thank the suited clown for teaching him with his life!

If it wasn't for him, he would probably spend months at the Divination Club, summarizing the rules of a Seer through numerous attempts—for better or for worse— before he began 'acting' strictly.

"Mr. Moretti, I sometimes even think of you as a philosopher," Angelica said with a sigh upon hearing Klein's reply.

"In my circle of friends, the term 'philosopher' is used to scold somebody." Klein was in a good mood.

With that said, he bowed, wore his hat, and left after bidding farewell.

Although Angelica was unaware of the gentleman's name or identity, Klein was in no way depressed. What he learned was sufficient enough for him to engage in the next phase of his plan.

…

36 Zouteland Street. Inside Blackthorn Security Company.

Dunn looked at the portrait in his hands with his deep gray eyes.

"You wish to carry out a search for this person?"

"Yes." Klein had long prepared a reason for this. "Captain, didn't I mention that I would head to the Divination Club to observe the reactions of its members on Hanass Vincent's sudden death? I didn't discover anything yesterday, but I accidentally found out today that the person in the portrait had appeared with Hanass Vincent once and was secretly discussing something with him. I flipped through our team's investigation report just now, but I didn't discover any person resembling him in the report."

There were no loopholes in his description. Even if Dunn Smith were to take this portrait to the Divination Club, he would get the same answer from Angelica.

Dunn cast his gaze away from the portrait and laughed.

"From the looks of it, the compensation funds weren't a waste."

… Captain, isn't your memory bad? Why would you mention the compensation at this point in time… Klein maintained a smile and didn't say a word.

"Was this drawn by you?" Dunn asked in passing.

"Yes. I drew it with the help of ritualistic magic," Klein replied, completely honest.

Of course, speaking the truth and revealing the whole truth were two different matters.

Dunn nodded slightly and said, "Get Old Neil to make a few more sets. I'll get Kenley and Royale to investigate and seek the cooperation of the police department. If this clue is of any use, you would've contributed greatly once again."

"May Goddess bless us." Klein tapped four spots on his chest as he appeared abnormally devout.

For him, all he needed from Dunn and company was to figure out the name and identity of the man in the portrait. He could divine his location above the gray fog!

…

Despite it being his day off, Klein didn't immediately return home after leaving the Blackthorn Security Company. Instead, he took the public carriage to the harbor and arrived in front of the Evil Dragon Bar's entrance.

In his considerations, although a Seer lacked the means to directly engage in combat with an enemy or the means to cast spells quickly, combat could be classified in many ways. Not all battles were chance encounters. As long as he had sufficient time to prepare, a Seer could similarly deal with an enemy using ritualistic magic. It was exactly how he resolved the magic mirror divination incident at Selena's house.

And this also meant that it was best if a Seer brought along the essential oils, herbs, and tiny candles to avoid being in a situation where they were unavailable when they were needed most, thus, resulting in a helpless death.

After all, not everyone was like Selena who had an entire assortment of mysticism items which could be used.

As for the ones he applied for, as Klein had practiced frequently, he had used up most of them. He kept what was left in his tiny inner pocket.

He patted the cash note in his pocket and pushed open Evil Dragon Bar's door and strode in.

It was noon and there weren't many customers in the bar. Nor were there any rat-baiting or boxing matches. It was quiet and not lively enough.

Klein observed the guests drinking beer and playing cards as he walked toward the billiard room that led to the underground market.

At that moment, he saw a muscular old man walk out with a torn Admiral's jacket draped over his shoulders.

"Were you the friend Old Neil brought last time?" Reeking with the smell of alcohol, the blue-eyed, messy brown-haired elder sized up Klein and laughed.

Klein guessed at his identity and took off his hat and bowed.

"Yes, how might I address you?"

"Old Neil often mentions you. I'm the boss here, Swain." The blue-eyed elder's arms were thick and brawny. He had firm muscles and had the bearing of a military officer.

Former Tingen Mandated Punisher Captain… Rumor has it that he was once part of the Royal Navy… Klein replied politely, "Yes."

"If you're in need of money, feel free to approach me." Swain laughed as he mentioned before walking towards the bar counter.

At that moment, Klein's heart stirred as he immediately shouted, "Wait a moment, Mr. Swain. I have something I would like to ask of you."

Swain halted in his steps, turned halfway around, and said with a chuckle, "You look, well—very similar."

No, I'm not having memory issues… The corner of Klein's lips twitched as he pointed at the portrait he drew and asked, "Have you met this gentleman before?"

He suddenly realized that Selena had likely been brought by Hanass Vincent to the underground market. This resulted in Elizabeth's knowledge of the Evil Dragon Bar as well. Then, could the man in the portrait who had some relationship with Hanass Vincent have come here before?

Swain took a careful look and replied affirmatively, "I remember him. He had asked me if I had documents or items related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range."

Documents and items related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range? Klein was taken aback as he suddenly connected that to another matter.

Back when he was borrowing the journal issue related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range at Deweyville Library, the librarian had casually mentioned that someone had just returned it. Therefore, he still remembered very cleverly and didn't need to flip through his name cards to determine if the man existed.

Could the gentleman who borrowed the journal issue before me be the one in the portrait?

The gentleman that had witnessed the exchange of the Antigonus family's notebook.

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CHAPTER 102
CLOTH MERCHANT

The more Klein thought about it, the more likely it seemed. Otherwise, who would have borrowed those random journal issues for no reason?

Yes, research regarding the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range is quite an unpopular field. Other than the corresponding lecturers and associate professors, the common hobbyist would've never heard of it. Even the original Klein, who was a history graduate, only knew about it from the Antigonus family's notebook… Although Tingen is a city of universities, there wouldn't be that many people who would interested in the topic. And even if there is anyone interested, most of them would remain within the university's compounds. There would be no need to borrow the book from the Deweyville Library.

The most important point is that the book happened to be borrowed only recently…

By analyzing it this way, there really is a problem. I wasn't sharp enough and failed to realize it… Sigh, it looks like I have no talent at being a detective or acting like Sherlock Holmes…

While these thoughts raced through his mind, the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, Swain asked in puzzlement, "Is there a problem?"

Since there were customers and bartenders around, he could only ask indirectly.

"Nothing at all. I'm just wondering how I can investigate this gentleman. As you know, Hanass Vincent died at his home." Klein had long prepared his

excuse.

He didn't want to make the Mandated Punishers become interested in the ancient relics from the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

"Vincent was one of the rather famous fortune-tellers in Tingen City. He often came here." Swain had indeed given a perfunctory answer, but as he recalled, he said, "Now that I think about it, the gentleman in the portrait did come together with Vincent at the very beginning…"

"That is exactly what I wanted to know. Do you remember his name?" Klein pressed immediately.

Swain shook his head and chuckled.

"I won't ask for my customers' names or identities unless I knew them to begin with, like Old Neil."

"Alright then." Klein deliberately revealed a saddened look.

To him, it didn't matter if Swain knew, because he could check the Deweyville Library.

To borrow books from a privately-funded library, he had to leave personal information, and his identification must have had sufficient credibility!

After all, Klein had relied on an introduction letter from a Senior Associate Professor before he obtained a library card.

Even if the gentleman had forged his information, it is very likely that he left some clues which can be helpful to my divination… Klein watched Swain as he returned to the bar counter before entering the billiard room in deep thought.

He wasn't in a hurry to head to the Deweyville Library for his investigations. He planned on completing his purchases first. After all, it

was unknown if he would encounter danger and be required to use ritualistic magic for subsequent developments.

After passing through a few rooms, Klein arrived at the underground market. There were a few stalls and customers, a clear indication that it wasn't peak hour yet.

Just as he took a step forward, he suddenly saw the monster, Ademisaul, who could smell the scent of death, standing in a corner.

The young man was pale, and his eyes gave off a hint of terror and madness. He had also noticed Klein as he looked over.

As they made eye contact, Ademisaul suddenly extended his hands to cover his face. He moved toward the corner of the wall in a panicked state.

Soon, he moved to a side door beside him and staggered as he ran out.

Is that necessary? I just nearly blinded you the last time… But I didn't do anything… Seriously, it's as if I'm the devil. Klein's facial expression was somewhat stiff.

He shook his head and smiled. He stopped thinking about the monster and came to a stall. He started shopping with a goal in mind.

After about half an hour, Klein spent a few pounds which was most of his secret stash of money.

He counted the three pounds and seventeen soli he had left, and he felt his heart ache. However, he touched the small metal bottle in the inner pocket of his black windbreaker.

"This is the Amantha extract, which Madam Daly used previously.

"This is powder mixed with drago tree bark and leaves.

"Essential oil which is extracted from slumber flowers.

"Dried chamomile petals.

"This is Holy Night Powder which I previously produced myself."

…

Klein recalled the items stored in every tiny pocket of his and repeated them. He did it to prevent himself from failing to find the ingredient that he would need at a crucial moment.

Relying on his unique traits in mysticism, he quickly finished memorizing them and walked toward the door.

Suddenly, he saw a somewhat familiar figure in the corner of his eyes.

It was a young lady in a casual green dress. Her smooth black hair was soft and glistening. She had a round face with long eyes. They gave her a sweet look and a refined bearing.

It's the girl who was shivering strangely on the public carriage? She does seem fine… I never expected her to be a mysticism enthusiast… Klein slowed down and thought for a few seconds before finally recalling who she was.

He had to admit that, other than Justice who he had never seen clearly, the young lady was the most beautiful girl he had seen ever since he transmigrated into this world.

The sweet and refined girl stood before a stall that sold mysticism books and, in a breach of etiquette, kneeled to rub her fingers against an ancient book.

The ancient book was bound with a black hardcover. The book cover had the words "Book of Witches" in Hermes.

"It records the black magic of witches. Although I haven't dared to try them, someone I know did, and it really worked." The vendor seized the opportunity to promote the book.

The beautiful lady thought and asked, "In your mind, what does a witch look like?"

"A witch? A wicked person who brings calamities, disease, and pain," the vendor answered after some thought.

Klein didn't hear their conversation because he had already quickly walked out the front entrance. He was rushing to the Deweyville Library in a hurry to settle everything before returning home to cook dinner for his brother and sister. Tomato Oxtail Soup was on the menu.

…

Backlund. Crown Turf Club.

Audrey Hall wore a long white dress with engageantes and ruffled edges, as well as lace around her chest. She stood in a VIP room and watched the horses gallop.

She wore a veiled hat decorated with blue ribbons and silk flowers, and a pair of light colored fishnet gloves. Her cold and distant gaze seemed out of place in the bustling venue.

Just as the racehorse breasted the tape, her friend Viscount Glaint came closer and said with a suppressed voice, "Audrey, every time I see you, you look beautiful from a different angle."

"How can I help you?" In the past, Audrey might have basked in the young man's compliment, but now she could see Glaint's ulterior motives through his speech and attitude.

Due to the early passing of Glaint's father, he had inherited his title of nobility at the age of twenty. He was a slightly skinny young man. He looked to the left and right, then chuckled softly as he said, "Audrey, I know a real Beyonder, a Beyonder that doesn't belong to the royal family."

You've disappointed me every time you said that… Audrey looked forward and replied elegantly, "Really?"

"I swear on my father's name. I have seen his Beyonder powers," Glaint replied with whisper.

Audrey was no longer the same as before in which should be excited over the news. She was now a Beyonder, but to prevent Glaint from turning suspicious, she widened her eyes and faked a surprised smile. She asked with her voice trembling, "When can I see him?"

Yes, it'd be great to meet other Beyonders. I can't just solve every triviality through the Tarot Club… Besides, I must gather my own resources to exchange them with Mr. Fool and Mr. Hanged Man… Not everything can be solved with money… Sigh, now that I've sent out the thousand pounds, I'll have to be more frugal…

Glaint was very satisfied with Audrey's response. He looked towards the racecourse and said, "Tomorrow afternoon, there will be a literature and music salon at my place."

…

Inside Deweyville Library.

Klein took out his identity card and badge from his pocket and showed them to the few librarians.

"I am a probationary inspector from the Special Operations Department of the Awwa County Police. I need your cooperation in an investigation," he said in a deep voice, recalling the police films that he used to watch.

The librarians looked at the identity card and badge before exchanging looks and nodding at each other.

"Go ahead and ask, Officer."

Klein recited the names of the journals like New Archeology and upon finishing, he said, "I want the borrowing records of the journal for the last two months."

He realized that one of the librarians had attended to him before, but it was obvious that the man didn't recognize him.

"Alright. Hold on a second." The librarians started searching and quickly found the recent borrowing records.

Klein flipped through the records seriously, looking for the man who had borrowed the same journal as he did.

There weren't many names since there was only one. He had borrowed the journal several times, including the issue that Klein knew of. The earliest entry was at the end of May, and the most recent one was last Saturday, a day before Hanass Vincent's death.

Klein ran his finger over the borrower's information and memorized it.

Sirius Arapis, cloth merchant, residing at 19 Howes Street…

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CHAPTER 103
DOING AS THE HEART WILLED

He resides at 19 Howes Street?

Whilst memorizing the information, Klein keenly noticed a piece of information.

Yes, Welch stayed on Howes Street. The Divination Club is on Howes Street. This cloth merchant named Sirius Arapis also lives on Howes Street… From the looks of it, it's nothing strange for Welch to know Hanass Vincent either. They might have even gotten to know each through Sirius Arapis…

Suddenly, Klein felt that he had linked the clues together as his thoughts turned clear.

He was originally confused as to how Welch would be acquainted with Hanass Vincent since this son of a banker wasn't particularly interested in mysticism. To him, money was more important than divinations. But now, Klein felt that he had an inkling as to how they became acquainted.

According to the descriptions of several magazines, middle-class and wealthy residents would gladly pay a visit to their neighbors from the same social class in order to form a social circle which is beneficial to them. Similarly, Welch and the cloth merchant, Sirius, absolutely have the motivation and opportunity to become friends since they both lived in the Howes Street vicinity…

It isn't hard to understand how Sirius knew Hanass Vincent, who regularly went to the Divination Club on Howes Street. Perhaps it was a coincidental meeting, or perhaps Hanass had helped him out before. Regardless, this made it possible for the two of them, who frequently ran into each other within the same area, to become closer to one another….

Hanass Vincent wanted to sell his ancient books, and thus, Sirius introduced him to Welch, who was an undergraduate of the History department…

In Hanass' dream, there was the figure of the suspected evil god, the "True Creator." He also knew of the proper incantation format. This proves that he was very deep into the realm of mysticism. The possibility that he might have even been a member of some secret organization cannot be dismissed.

I cannot rule out the possibility of him joining some secret organization under Sirius's influence.

…

With ideas coming to him so easily, Klein could tell that the information the man had left behind had a certain level of credibility without even using divination methods.

Even if he isn't called Sirius Arapis, nor work as a cloth merchant, and doesn't live at 19 Howes Street, he definitely resides at Howes Street or, at the very least, somewhere nearby!

While these ideas ran through his mind, Klein viewed the borrowing records once again with this new train of thought.

The last time he came to Deweyville Library was last Saturday, a day before Selena's birthday party, which was also a day before Hanass Vincent died. Several days have already passed since then, but he hasn't returned the issues that he borrowed.

According to past records, if he only borrowed two issues, he would usually return them the next day.

Could this mean that he knows of Hanass' death and was scared to the point that he no longer dares to come to the Deweyville Library again?

Yes, he started by borrowing several unrelated history books and journals until he narrowed down what he needed, which is very similar to what I had read…

This means that there was no one teaching him. There was no Senior Associate Professor from the history department of a university. He did this completely through trial and error.

What would a shocked target do? Two choices. One, if he had all the necessary information, he would head straight to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range. Two, if he still lacks information, he would lay low and observe the situation. He would only show himself again if he's certain that Hanass' death wouldn't implicate him.

Having made this conclusion, Klein closed the borrowing records and returned them to the librarians. He then took out the portrait and asked if anyone had seen the man. Unfortunately, many people came to borrow books every day, and the librarians didn't have any impression of the average person.

"Alright, thank you for your time." Klein put away his identification documents and his badge.

He had no intention of continuing the investigation alone. This wasn't only dangerous, but also troublesome. He planned to head to Zouteland Street once again and hand the case over to Captain and his teammates. He then planned to go home and prepare his Tomato Oxtail Soup for his siblings before heading to the world above the gray fog to divine the target's whereabouts and condition.

"Officer, is there anything else?" a librarian asked sincerely as he heaved a sigh of relief.

Klein nodded slightly and answered, "No, I will come back if there are new clues."

He held his black cane with his left hand and made his way to the door.

At this moment, he saw a man enter the library with his head hung low. He was dressed in a double-breasted coat, its collars standing tall.

When they walked past each other, Klein caught a glance of his thick, messy brows, and his pair of grayish-blue eyes!

These were things the tall collar couldn't hide!

Sirius? Sirius Arapis? A coincidence? Klein froze. He didn't expect to meet his target here!

What kind of luck was this!

Wasn't this too much of a coincidence?

He evaluated his physical condition and felt his aching sore muscles. Thus, he acted as though nothing had happened and continued walking towards the door.

Well, we have to follow what our heart tells us! Safety matters!

It doesn't matter if I missed this opportunity as long as Sirius is still in Tingen!

At this moment, the man in the double-breasted coat arrived before the counter and was handing the journals to one of the librarians.

"It's a return," he said with a soft, muffled tone.

The librarian received the journals causally and when he saw it, he suddenly froze.

He subconsciously looked up and differently as his body couldn't help but tremble.

"Is there a problem?" the man asked in a deep voice.

His question seemed like a spark that ignited a fuse, causing the librarian to instantly lose his self-control. He sprinted to the side and shouted,

"Officer!"

"The criminal is here!"

At this moment, Klein, who hadn't left the building, cursed madly in his heart.

He instinctively reached for his holster with his right hand and drew his revolver.

That man froze for a moment before turning and breaking into a sprint.

But he didn't head for the door. Instead, he escaped in the direction of the oriel window to the side, as if he wanted to smash through the glass and jump out onto the street.

Klein, who was flustered, turned his head to see the scene when he felt a sudden calm.

He realized that even though he was afraid of the target, his target was more afraid of him!

The man must be unable to determine my abilities in such an abrupt meeting. He isn't clear on what I am adept in, and so, he will instinctively

avoid a direct confrontation and look for other ways to escape! Confident of his analysis, Klein lifted his revolver and pulled the trigger.

At that moment, the man in the double-breasted coat abruptly rolled onto the ground in an attempt to avoid the bullet.

Following up on that, he pressed down on the ground with his right hand and propelled himself into the air towards the oriel window.

Click! Klein's first shot was empty.

But this was something he had expected. He took advantage of Sirius's inability to dodge while in midair to aim at his torso and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The silver demon hunting bullets tore through the air and penetrated straight through Sirius's back.

Crash! The glass shattered and Sirius flew out the window, leaving drops of crimson blood on the crystalline glass fragments and windowsill.

Klein was no longer afraid now that the target was injured. He ran over and jumped out the window with the help of a chair.

This was the area lining the back of Deweyville Library's ground floor. A row of trees isolated a lush green field.

The injured Sirius was running to the side, in an attempt to enter a small alley between two buildings. Having not practiced shooting at moving targets, Klein didn't dare to fire blindly. He could only carry his cane in one hand and his gun in the other as he pursued the man in a black coat.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He followed the trail of blood on the floor and tried to close the distance.

With a corner coming up, the injured Sirius's speed became slower and slower. Klein, who had been waiting for an opportunity to capture him, suddenly felt a little afraid. He felt as though the man in front of him wasn't human, but a wolf or a tiger, one that harbored terrifying dangers.

This was an instinct he had as a Seer, and also a warning given to him by his spirituality!

Klein immediately slowed down, his eyes scanning the blood on the ground.

Compared to the blood he had seen earlier, Sirius's blood was now black!

At this moment, a violent wind overwhelmed him. Sirius's face was reflected in Klein's eyes.

Thick, messy brows. Grayish blue eyes. Multiple protruding warts. An open mouth with two rows of white teeth.

Sirius was launching a counterattack at this moment!

This made the face reflected in Klein's eyes more visible. He could even smell a particularly putrid stench!

Sirius pounced a distance of seven or eight meters, far more than any normal human being could jump. But as Klein had stopped chasing him just in time, there was still a distance of nearly ten meters between them.

When the distance was shortened to two meters, the sticky saliva caused by drool and the disgusting dense warts formed a harrowing scene that made Klein's nerves tense up.

Without thinking, he seized the opportunity of the temporary immobility caused by Sirius's pounce to raise his right hand. He fired without stopping, allowing the bullets to rain down on the target's head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shooting from such a close distance allowed the silver demon hunting bullets to drill through Sirius's head. Blood splattered everywhere as his face became more and more mangled, until he staggered backwards.

Klein had emptied the bullets in his revolver in an instant. He subconsciously wanted to take a few steps back in order to confirm the results of this battle.

But at this moment, Sirius gave Klein the shock of his life by trying his hardest to stand up straight. Klein abruptly lifted the cane in his left hand.

Smack! The sturdy silver-inlaid black cane struck Sirius's neck, leaving a dark red mark.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Klein acted on instinct, raining blows on his opponent until Sirius collapsed stumbling onto the ground.

Huff! Puff! Huff! Klein supported himself with his cane and took deep breaths. His eyes were trained intently on his target, afraid that Sirius would suddenly jump back to life.

At that moment, Sirius' head had basically been smashed into a pulp, and the warts gradually receded. His body stopped moving after a few convulsions.

Klein was in no hurry to examine the corpse. Instead, he tossed his cane to the side and took out the demon hunting bullets he had on him and reloaded his revolver.

After doing this, he collected himself and fought back his disgust, kneeling down to search the pockets of Sirius's double-breasted coat.

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CHAPTER 104
MR. Z

One pocket, two pockets, three pockets… Klein soon found a bloodstained wallet, a Deweyville Library card, two pairs of brass keys, an unstuffed smoking pipe, a sheathed dagger, and a few letters that were folded neatly.

Laying everything onto the ground except for the letters, he stood up straight and looked at the wallet. He confirmed that there were only ten plus soli and some copper pennies.

The craftsmanship of the wallet is quite exquisite. It's such a pity… Klein sighed, feeling a little distracted.

If I didn't spend so much of my private stash of money, buying a wallet would've been on my schedule today.

After shaking his head, Klein opened the letters and quickly scanned through them.

"Dear Mr. Z,"

"Please allow me to defend myself. When Hanass and I sold off the Antigonus family's notebook, it wasn't stupidity or betrayal. It didn't appear special in any way when it was in our hands."

"I suspect that it's alive and that it's a wicked item armed with a certain life and wisdom. It was something dangerous that needed to be sealed."

"At different stages and before different people, it shows different contents!"

"This is a proven fact that I've learnt from the lamb in the police station."

"Although the notebook shows content that is sufficiently true each time with plenty of evidence, I believe that it would only reveal the completed content in the hands of a descendant of the Antigonus family."

"When Hanass and I received it, we could only see some trivial matters of the Antigonus family, the general situation of the Nation of the Evernight on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, and also the three Sequence potion formulas we handed in to you previously."

"As you know, the Secret Order has the Seer pathway in its grasp and possesses powerful tracking abilities, so Hanass and I believed that it would be a risky move to continue keeping the notebook. The value it had presented to us wasn't sufficient for us to take the risk."

"Since we couldn't wait for your reply, we agreed amongst ourselves to sell the notebook to Welch, who was living on the same street . He enjoyed collecting relics and ancient books, and he could afford to pay a high price for it. As for the subsequent developments, you are already aware of it."

"This is the first thing that I'd like to explain. As I am writing these words, Hanass is dead. He died due to a heart attack during his sleep. That must be a blessing from God, to prevent him from suffering the outcome of falling into the hands of heretics."

"I had no choice but to move to somewhere safer, more hidden. I didn't even dare to leave the house. Luckily, the lamb told me that the reason Hanass was being eyed by the heretics wasn't because of the Antigonus family's notebook, nor was his identity exposed. It was just that he had taken in a silly female disciple in the hopes of slowly developing her into one of us."

"His female disciple had stolen a glance at his secret incantation and tried the magic divination while a Nighthawk heretic was watching. I believe you

can pretty much guess the rest of the story, so there is no need for me to describe it."

"It's a pity that the position of the lamb isn't high enough, so the actual details cannot be determined."

"From various feedback, it seems the heretics have yet to suspect me. Their investigations came to a halt due to Hanass' sudden death."

"Therefore, I will return to the streets and plan to borrow a few more journal issues from the Deweyville Library to seek out more clues."

"As a faction that also had the Seer pathway in its grasp, the Antigonus family must have had some divinations regarding its decimation. They must have left behind secret treasures that would allow for the revival of the family!"

"There's sufficient reason to believe that the treasure is hidden on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, which is in one of the relics in the Nation of the Evernight!"

Having read that, Klein's pupils constricted rapidly. He nearly dropped the letter.

The pathway that the Antigonus family had in its grasp was the Seer pathway?

What a coincidence!

…

Thunder seemed to boom in Klein's head again and again that left him in a daze. He felt as though it was destiny.

The notebook that led to the original Klein's death and indirectly helped me transmigrate, originated from the Antigonus family that has the Seer

pathway in its grasp. The one that eventually made me choose the Seer potion was Emperor Roselle's diary, while Emperor Roselle was biased towards the Seer Sequence because of the mysterious Mr. Zaratul who was the leader of the Secret Order, which also has the Seer pathway in its grasp!

… This is like a suffocating net sewn by Fate.

What exactly is lurking behind all of this?

Klein held the letter and paced back and forth. He needed to verify the contents with other sources.

Yes, the Secret Order that the Zaratul family controls is pursuing and searching for the belongings left behind by the Antigonus family. If both parties shared the same Beyonder Sequence, there would be a sufficient reason and motive. Perhaps, it is to bridge any missing Sequences, obtain rare ingredients for a higher Sequence advancement, or covet the other party's accumulated experiences in avoiding the loss of control…

Going by this line of thought, it is rather reasonable that the Antigonus family has at least part of the Seer Sequence chain.

Yes, when I was divining for clues pertaining to the Clown potion, the images that emerged were mostly related to the Antigonus family. The only exception was the suited clown from the Secret Order… Therefore, the true meaning behind the symbolism is that each scene carries the possibility of obtaining the Clown potion and a clue. However, I didn't understand the crux of the issue and regrettably missed it.

With the two corroborating evidence, Klein nearly believed the matters that Sirius had brought up in the letter. He also understood why he constantly heard the word 'Hornacis' in the murmurs he shouldn't be hearing.

The earliest occurrence of this happening was when I first consumed the Seer potion!

He wore a serious expression as he thought to himself.

Meanwhile, he guessed that 'being a survivor of those that made contact with a relic of the Antigonus family' and 'becoming a Beyonder of the Seer pathway' were two necessary conditions to hear the murmurs saying 'Hornacis.'

Is there really a secret treasure buried within the ancient ruins on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range by the Antigonus family? No, I can't think about this! Just the notebook alone has killed so many people. Any complete treasure would be even more terrifying! Klein shook his head subconsciously and cast his gaze onto the third piece of paper, which was the last of the letters.

"Honorable Mr. Z, I hope I can gain your assistance. I believe that you should be sufficiently interested in the treasure too."

"Until then, I will make myself look like a normal person, a normal lover of history."

"When the end of days arrives, I will offer all of Tingen's lambs as a sacrifice to God."

"Humbly, Sirius Arapis."

When he finished reading Sirius's letter, Klein had the urge to laugh.

Heh, why do I feel like I saved Tingen? What was this guy trying to do? Heretics are truly unbelievable…

Who is this Mr. Z? He seems like someone in a high position… At the very least, he should be at the same sequence as Captain.

Where was Sirius sending the letter to? He didn't write down the address… It seems like that's the cautiousness of a heretic. They wouldn't put the address on until the moment before they sent it out…

Right, if the Antigonus family had the potion of the Seer pathway in its grasp, then would the Clown potion be among the three formulas inside the Antigonus family's notebook that Sirius sent?"

Highly likely!

In that instant, Klein seemed to have found clues to the Clown potion.

Although Sirius didn't bring the formula along with him, it was possible that he had left some form of record at his hideout. He must have also had it in his head, in his memories!

Klein looked at the corpse before him and considered the problem of making a dead person speak.

It required almost zero consideration, as an idea immediately popped into his head.

"Mediumship!"

Spirit Mediums could directly communicate with spirits that had yet to disperse. Seers, Mystery Pryers, and others could roughly accomplish the same thing using ritualistic magic.

Previously, when he was dealing with the corpse of the suited clown, there were three things that had kept Klein from using mediumship. Firstly, he was in a hurry to save the rest. Secondly, he didn't have the ingredients with him, and lastly, he lacked confidence. Thus, he didn't consider the option of mediumship and missed his best chance. When they returned to Blackthorn Security Company, the spirit was mostly gone. Even a Spirit Medium could only get superficial information.

But now, Klein happened to have all the ingredients and tools, and he happened to have the experience of communicating with lingering resentment through the help of dream divination.

My only concern about contacting the spirit of a heretic would be being placed in the same situation as Captain's entry into Hanass' dream where he saw a horrifying existence… However, Captain only remained frail for two days, and he wasn't considered severely injured. Yes, I could give it a try! He hesitated for less than twenty seconds before making a decision. He didn't want to miss out on this opportunity.

He raised his head, turned around, and cast his gaze toward the spot where the window had shattered. There was a crowd gathered there watching.

He took out his identification card and badge before returning to the broken window. He then told the onlookers through the shattered oriel window,

"I am a probationary inspector from the Special Operations Department of the Awwa County Police. I have shot the criminal to death. Please take this badge to the nearest police station and tell them to send backup to deal with the follow-up."

"The rest are to help me cordon off this area. Do not allow anyone to come close for they might contaminate the scene."

"Yes, Officer!" The librarian that caused Klein the trouble quickly took the badge.

When the entire scene was cordoned off and no one could enter the grass patch, Klein returned to the corner and stood by the side of the corpse.

He was glad that the innocent crowd couldn't see the dead body, which looked more like a monster than a human. He put down his cane and revolver, then reached into the inner pocket of his windbreaker to take out a metal bottle.

He was going to use the techniques of a mediumship ritual with dream divination to make the dead man speak!

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CHAPTER 105
SPIRIT CHANNELING

Klein twisted open the golden bottle's cap and brought it to his nose. He took a whiff of the stimulating scent that energized him.

This was Holy Night Powder made using Slumber flowers, Dragon Blood grass, deep red sandalwood, mint, and other herbs. Since it was simple to concoct, Klein had made a batch the moment he got the ingredients from the underground market. It was going to be of use now.

He poured a little of the Holy Night Powder on his palm and collected himself. His irises turned dark.

Next, Klein put away the metal bottle and scattered the powder onto the ground after infusing his spirituality into it.

He scattered the powder as he walked, forming a circle around Sirius's corpse.

A formless barrier rose, separating them from the outside world.

Klein flicked away the remaining Holy Night Powder on his hand and took out the other metal bottles. He sprinkled the Amantha extract and other liquids in the surrounding area.

The ritual he set up was different from the one Old Neil used at Ray Bieber's house since the aim of the ritual was different.

For example, Old Neil poured the liquids before using the Holy Night Powder. That could create a serene and holy state second only to an actual

altar. Klein had used the Holy Night Powder first before pouring the liquids to prevent Sirius's remnant spirituality from being disturbed by the surrounding objects while still barely managing to have an environment that satisfied the requirements of the ritual.

If he had used Old Neil's method, the rest of Sirius's spirituality would've been purged, making it impossible to establish a connection.

After finishing his preparations, Klein put away the materials and entered a state of Cogitation. He recited the Hermes incantations softly, "I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess' loving grace.

"I pray that you'll allow me to communicate with the heretic's spirituality inside this altar."

…

As the incantations reverberated throughout the sealed space, Klein suddenly felt a massive, terrifying, and mysterious energy descend upon him.

His eyes turned completely black as though he had lost his pupils and the whites of his eyes.

Seizing the opportunity, Klein recited a divination statement in his heart, "The formula to the Clown potion.

"The formula to the Clown potion."

…

As he was reciting the statement, he used Cogitation to temporarily enter a dreamlike state.

It was a hazy gray world without a sky or ground. Klein was unusually alert as he observed a transparent, ethereal figure.

He extended his right hand and touched the remnants of Sirius's spirit.

The scene in front of him changed with a rumble.

It was a study table painted with dark red paint. There were three candles on a silver candle stand, as well as a blank piece of paper.

Sirius had a pen in his hand. He wrote in Loen language, "This is the second formula, its name in the notebook is 'Clown.'"

"80 milliliters of pure water, 5 drops of tornapple juice, 7 grams of black-rimmed sunflower powder, 10 grams of golden cloak grass powder, 3 drops of poison hemlock. These are the supplementary ingredients."

"The main supernatural ingredients are: one crystal of the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose."

Sirius seemed to have the Clown potion's formula memorized as he quickly finished writing it.

He paused for a moment and took a sip of coffee, then he unwound the silver pendulum around his wrist.

He held the pendulum and closed his eyes, muttering terms to himself such as "the end of days", "peace of mind", "hope for the Lord's blessings", and "confess".

After Sirius finished his prayer, Klein finally saw the pendulum clearly.

Under the wound silver chain was a thumb-sized human figurine.

The figurine had a single eye, a trait unique to giants. It was facing down, its legs bound by chains that connected upwards.

At that moment, the single eye of the giant suddenly had a faint red glow.

Crack!

The scene Klein witnessed shattered as his legs buckled, almost causing him to kneel to the ground.

Klein felt pain in his head as though he had been struck ruthlessly in the head with a bat. His vision turned blood-red as his hands involuntarily reached out to protect his knees.

He recovered several seconds later and stood back up. He felt that his spirituality was unusually weak, as if he had heard the murmurings that penetrated his mind once again.

But due to his progress in 'digesting' the magic medicine, the adverse reaction calmed down quickly.

The Hanged Giant, the True Creator… Sirius and Hanass were both members of the Aurora Order? But the Captain saw a huge cross in Hanass' dream. The terrifying being crucified on the cross wasn't the Aurora Order's Hanged Giant… Klein took two deep breaths and waited for his spirituality to slowly recover.

The Aurora Order was a secret organization that sprang into existence about two to three hundred years ago. They worshiped the True Creator and symbolized him with The Hanged Giant. They believed that every human being had divine qualities, and as long as they persevered and made it through the countless trials, they would be able to accumulate enough divine qualities to become angels.

According to the internal records of the Nighthawks, the Sequence 9 of the Aurora Order was Secrets Suppliant. These Beyonders could sense the existence of mysterious and horrifying beings and were armed with a decent amount of knowledge regarding sacrifices and some knowledge on ritualistic magic. There was enough evidence to claim that senior Secrets Suppliants experienced distortions of their worldview and lost control easily.

Little was known about the Sequence 7 which the Aurora Order had grasped. Sequence 8 was Listener. This was considered quite a terrifying 'job' for a Beyonder.

Every Listener could listen directly to the whispers of the secret entities; thus, they frequently came into contact with powerful, distorted, unique abilities. But consequently, if they were unable to advance, it was difficult for them to survive the next five years after becoming a Listener. Furthermore, the comments the Nighthawks had in the reports were that every Listener was a lunatic. Even if they looked normal on the surface, they were always crazy on the inside.

The details of the report regarding the Aurora Order flashed through Klein's mind. His initial theory was that Sirius was a Secrets Suppliant.

From the description, Secrets Suppliant are as hopeless as Seers in battle. That does fit Sirius's actions just now. What happened later was a loss of control brought about by the injury? Yes, Frye once said that every Beyonder would more or less undergo some weird changes after they die… Klein thought as he tapped four points on his chest to praise the Goddess.

After his spirituality recovered slightly, he concluded the ritual with the appropriate procedure and dismantled the wall of spirituality.

With a whoosh, a gust of wind blew as Klein forced himself to look at Sirius's corpse.

He noticed that there was still an obvious wart on Sirius's mangled face. It was a dark purple wart, almost black. There seemed to be liquid and a light gleaming within.

"What kind of transformation was that?" Klein rubbed his temples, not daring to touch it.

He bent over and retrieved his cane, allowing it to bear his weight.

After what had just happened, he knew that Sirius's spirituality had been completely destroyed. Even the Spirit Medium Daly would be unable to communicate with him.

After a while, Klein saw Captain Dunn and his partners, Leonard and Kenley.

"It seems like your fate is tied to Beyonders and evil forces. In just a few weeks, you have come across more supernatural incidents than what we usually see in months," Leonard joked, looking at the corpse on the ground.

"It might not be a coincidence," Klein added, as he suddenly thought about the red chimney he had seen in his dream divination, as well as the majestic palace on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and the formless focus on him. He took the opportunity to mention it in passing.

Dunn surveyed the surroundings and, with his gray eyes trained on Klein, asked, "You tried channeling his spirit?"

There were still traces of Holy Night Powder and the scent of the essential oils.

"Yes," Klein replied truthfully. "I was worried that you would arrive late and that the remains of his spirituality would scatter."

"You don't look well. Are you alright?" the short Kenley asked in concern.

Klein passed Sirius's undelivered letter to the captain and began from the beginning.

"When I went to the underground market to purchase materials for the rituals, I suddenly remembered that Selena had also once gone to the Evil Dragon Bar and that it was Hanass Vincent that brought her there. This meant that Hanass was a regular there. Thus, I suspected that the person in the portrait, someone who's definitely connected to Hanass, might have gone to the underground market too.

"I asked the boss Swain about the portrait, and he gave me confirmation. He told me that the man had once tried to buy documents and items related to the Hornacis Mountains. That reminded me of the library. I recalled that the librarian had mentioned that someone had just returned the journal issue I wanted to borrow…"

Leonard stood to the side, listening with a smile. He suddenly interrupted, "And so you brought your identification documents and badge here to flip through the borrowing records? Actually, I am very curious; why would you come into conflict with this man here? Even if it was a direct encounter, with your style of doing things, you would've pretended that you didn't know him and would just leave the library. Then you would come to Zouteland Street to ask for our help."

"Yes, there was no need for you to take the risk. As long as you confirm the target and that he hasn't left Tingen, there would always be a way to find him," Dunn added as he reviewed the letter.

Klein immediately said in embarrassment, "The librarian recognized him and shouted for the police to help.

"There's no way I could have pretended not to hear that…"

Leonard and Kenley looked at each other. One tried to cover his amusement, while the other turned his head to the side.

Dunn nodded, his gaze leaving the letters.

"Did you get anything from channeling his spirit?"

"I saw a pendulum that took the shape of a Hanged Giant. I saw a blood-red glow flash in the giant's only eye before I was forced out of the ritual," Klein described honestly.

He didn't want to talk about the Clown potion for the time being as he had two considerations.

First, if Dunn and the rest were able to find Sirius's hideout and the corresponding records, then it would make no difference if he told them or not, as there would be no additional contributions attributed to him.

Second, if Dunn and the rest were unable to find it, he could report it in the future. This way, he would be awarded with another contribution, allowing him to acquire the ingredients needed to concoct a potion. This was a way to obtain double the rewards for a single task, a technique that stemmed from Old Neil's recent teachings.

"Aurora Order?" Dunn muttered to himself before he asked some relevant questions.

After Klein answered all his questions, he saw the fatigue in Klein's eyes and waved his cane.

"Not bad. You foiled a scheme that was targeting Tingen. You can go back and rest. Kenley, bring Old Neil over."

After giving out instructions, Dunn smiled bitterly and shook his head.

"Before Sequence 6, Beyonders of the Sleepless pathway lack many supplemental abilities. We can only conduct the simplest of ritualistic magic."

"Captain, you mean that from Sequence 6 onwards, a Sleepless pathway Beyonder would gain improvements in the corresponding aspects?" Klein asked out of curiosity.

"Yes," Dunn confirmed.

…

After leaving the Deweyville Library, Klein nearly fell asleep in the carriage on multiple occasions on his way back to Daffodil Street.

He lumbered into the house, he then removed his hat and jacket before falling asleep on the sofa.

Sometime later, he woke up abruptly, took out his pocket watch, and snapped it open.

"Melissa will be back in half an hour, Benson in forty-five minutes… If I don't get up, I'll have to make them wait an hour before we can have dinner…" Klein rubbed his forehead as he entered the kitchen.

He washed his face with cold water, then took out the oxtail, tomatoes, carrots, and onions he had bought that afternoon.

After he prepared the ingredients, he suddenly froze. He had the feeling that his actions just now formed a strange juxtaposition with the incident that afternoon.

"I am a man who just saved Tingen…" Klein mumbled in amusement. He put on a white apron and got to making dinner.

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CHAPTER 106
ARTIST KLEIN

After eight in the evening, in the Moretti family's dining room.

As he looked at the shallow soup left in the bowl, Benson raised his hand to cover his mouth to give a satisfied burp.

"Although that was our third time eating it, I still find it delicious. The sourness and sweetness of the tomato and the chewy texture of the oxtail blends into a perfect and unique flavor. Klein, I'm sorry that the Blackthorn Security Company caused Tingen City to lose such an outstanding chef."

Melissa leaned backwards in her chair and nodded in agreement silently.

"This is because you have yet to try real cooking." Klein smiled humbly. "If we have a chance in the future, let's head to Bonaparte Restaurant on Howes Street for some authentic Intis cuisine, and also to Coastline Restaurant in the Golden Indus borough for some southern delicacies."

These were restaurants that were always covered in the newspapers, where the average cost per person was around a pound and a half.

"I like your cooking more," Melissa answered without hesitation.

Benson chuckled and changed the topic.

"But I ultimately feel that there's something lacking from the tomato oxtail soup. Perhaps, it shouldn't be eaten with bread?"

Klein nodded in agreement.

"It's best complemented with rice."

"Rice…" Melissa muttered with an expression of yearning.

Tingen, which was located north, wasn't considered a big city. Besides a few particular restaurants, it was difficult to have any chance of eating rice.

To Benson and Melissa, this kind of food only existed in the descriptions of newspapers and textbooks.

Looking at his sister's expression, Klein laughed.

"Wait till we save another six month's salary, and we will find a chance to go on vacation in Desi Bay and try the delicacies there."

Desi Bay was located in the far south of the Loen Kingdom, and a third of it belonged to Feynapotter Kingdom. It had plenty of sunlight and beautiful scenery, and the paella there was very famous.

Before Melissa could share her opinion on saving money, Klein said, "In another three months, I should get another raise. By then, we could totally fulfill our desire to travel as well as save money for necessities."

"Why?" Benson and Melissa's attention was redirected as expected.

Klein coughed lightly and smiled while explaining, "Due to my professionalism, the police department which always collaborates with our company intends to hire me as their part-time history consultant. They would pay me extra, at least two pounds a week. If you see me in a police uniform in the future and showing the corresponding police documentation, please don't be shocked.

"Of course, as you know, the work efficiency in governmental departments is as slow as a ninety-year-old lady's footsteps. They still have to go through a lengthy procedure, and they're required to do a thorough inspection of me. Hence, on my off days for the next two months, I'll be heading to Khoy

University quite often to see my mentor and the teaching staff I know to learn more."

Seeing the shocked look in his brother and sister's eyes, he paused and said with a strange expression, "Just like Emperor Roselle said, 'One is never too old to learn.'"

Benson maintained a few seconds of silence before saying in a half self-deprecating and half emotional manner, "Is it too late for me to sign up for university? Knowledge really is wealth."

And also power… Klein added silently.

"Benson, you need Klein's grammar books and his classic literature textbooks," Melissa said out of the blue, stealing the words from Klein's mouth.

Benson's expression seemed to change. He gritted his teeth and said, "Klein, pass me those books tonight.

"Even if all they do is put me to sleep, I am determined to read them for an hour, no—an hour and a half a day.

"I swear in the name of the Goddess! If I can't do it, I will be a curly-haired baboon!"

A smile immediately plastered across Klein's face.

"No problem."

…

The next morning, Klein hung his coat and hat on the clothes rack in the break room. Then he followed Rozanne's instructions and walked to the basement to the duty room outside Chanis Gate.

Captain Dunn and members Frye, Seeka, Royale, Leonard, and Kenley were all there.

As his gray eyes glanced past the newly promoted Nighthawk, Dunn smiled and said, "We have a routine meeting every Thursday to summarize past missions and discuss various challenges."

I am a man who has endured the test of many regular meetings as well… Klein lampooned. He found a seat and joked, "Do I need to introduce myself?"

Dunn smiled and turned to look at Kenley.

"Briefly tell us about the investigation of Sirius Arapis."

Kenley was also a Nighthawk who had been promoted from a member of the civilian staff. He wasn't very tall, his brown hair was quite thick, his body size was average, his muscles were very toned, and he looked like someone who was smart and capable.

He thought and said, "With Old Neil's help, we found Sirius's secret hideout. There were many books and items at the scene. From them, we can be certain that Sirius was one of the underground members of the secret organization, the Aurora Order. He was also a Secrets Suppliant.

"There's sufficient evidence to show that he and Hanass Vincent sold the Antigonus family notebook to Welch. Those who don't remember Welch can ask Klein about him.

"We found valuable items, including three Sequence potion formulas, which are Sequence 9 Seer, Sequence 9 Apprentice, and Sequence 8 Clown…

"The subsequent task is to use Sirius's social circle and the letters we found to locate other outer circle members of the Aurora Order. The focus of our search will be directed at the heretic who has infiltrated the police department.

"Also, people who were in contact with Hanass need to be reinvestigated."

Dunn nodded lightly and looked towards Klein.

"As you heard just now, we've obtained the Clown potion formula, but are unable to determine if it's real. We have to wait for the Holy Cathedral to give us feedback.

"In the mission relating to the Aurora Order, you have made a crucial contribution. Plus, given that you shot a member of the Secret Order, it won't be long until you accrue enough contributions to be promoted. But, I have to remind you that not everyone is like Daly. You have to suppress your desire and wait for three years. In order to avoid losing control, you can't allow your mindset to be affected by our discovery of the Clown potion formula."

Captain, you don't understand how magical it is to 'act'… I have already confirmed the authenticity of the Clown potion formula using divination above the gray fog last night… Klein nodded obediently.

"I will keep my emotions in check."

Then Seeka Tron, the quiet Midnight Poet with white hair and black eyes, said, "We still haven't found any clues regarding Instigator Tris. I suspect that he has already fled from Tingen."

…

After they were done exchanging their new information, Klein left the duty room and found Old Neil to continue his mysticism lessons. In the afternoon, he went over to his combat teacher, Gawain, to do basic strength, endurance, and overall coordination training.

…

With the sun still up and bright at five.

Klein took off his training costume, took a quick shower, and changed into his original clothing. He then took the public carriage to Besik Street.

He hadn't forgotten about the red chimney that he had seen in his dream divination, nor did he forget about the man that he suspected to be a member of the Psychology Alchemists who had bought supplementary ingredients for the Spectator potion in the underground market. These things would be inconvenient to investigate in his role as a Nighthawk.

"Number 27. Henry's Private Detective Company… Yup, it's here." Klein found a private detective company according to the newspaper's descriptions. It was said to be trustworthy.

He put on a mask, lowered his top hat, and flipped up his collar. He walked up the stairs and came to the company on the second floor.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He knocked on the door that was half-closed.

"Please come in," said a voice that seemed to be affected by phlegm.

Klein lifted his cane and pushed the door to enter. He saw the detective company using an almost open layout. There were four employees sitting at their respective seats partitioned into small cubicles.

"Hi, I'm Detective Henry. How may I help you?" a man in a white shirt and black vest greeted him.

He held a smoking pipe in his hand, and he had a prominent jawline, blade-like eyebrows, and dark blue eyes that sized up his client.

Klein used the collar of his windbreaker to block half of his face as he spoke.

"I have two matters to entrust to you. How are your rates?"

"That depends on the difficulty of the task." Detective Henry retracted his gaze and pointed towards the sofa in the guest area. "Let's talk over there."

Klein followed him to the semi-partitioned area and sat on the single-seat sofa. He didn't take off his coat, nor did he take off his hat and mask.

He purposely made his voice hoarse and said, "First, I need you to help me find a house with a chimney that looks like this, as well as information on who the owner and current tenant are."

As he spoke, he took out a neatly folded paper. When he opened it, there was a chimney with its color noted down and its surrounding scenery.

This was the drawing that Klein completed by using the uniqueness of the area above the gray fog and the method of praying to himself.

"What a great drawing…" Detective Henry complimented subconsciously. He then knitted his eyebrows and said, "This is not complicated but very tedious. It would require a long time and a large amount of manpower."

"I understand." Klein nodded lightly.

Detective Henry pondered for a moment and said, "Seven pounds. The price for this job would be seven pounds. In addition, you have to give me at least two weeks."

"Alright. Second, help me find this gentleman and find out his identity. The only thing I know is that he occasionally appears at the Evil Dragon Bar near the harbor borough. And he must not detect any men you send. He is very sensitive and he has terrifying observational skills." Klein took out the second portrait.

He intended to get in touch with a member of the Psychology Alchemists to see if he could find any valuable information and materials. For example, perhaps a formula that could be exchanged with Justice?

"Three pounds, such a mission would cost about three or four pounds. Your outstanding drawing skills will help my assistant and I save time," Detective Henry replied skillfully.

"Ten pounds in total?" Klein found the price upsetting.

Detective Henry took a puff on his pipe and said, "Yes, and you need to put a deposit of two pounds. When there's progress, you'll need to pay another three to five pounds. The rest of the payment can be made when the mission is completed."

"Then I shall come next week to check on your progress." Klein didn't haggle over the price to prevent the observant detective from remembering any of his characteristics.

After they signed a standard contract, he took out two one-pound notes and passed them to the detective. He only had one pound and seventeen soli left from his savings.

As Detective Henry watched the man wearing a gauze mask and a black windbreaker with its collar raised leave in a hurry, he had a suspicious look in his eyes as he smoked his pipe.

Why is he looking for a house that has that kind of chimney?

He must be an artist, or at least a professional sketch artist of some sort…

…

In the afternoon, in Viscount Glaint's luxurious mansion.

Audrey, with her maidservant in tow, followed etiquette and passed her hand to the host. She looked at him giving her hand a quick peck.

"Your beauty accentuates my salon," Glaint first gave a compliment as usual. Then, he lowered his voice and said, "That lady is already here. She's

a Beyonder and also an author."

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CHAPTER 107
FORS

"Author?" Audrey asked casually as she observed Glaint's reaction.

Subsequently, she didn't have to mind the presence of her maidservant, Annie, since they chatted about ordinary topics.

Glaint straightened his body and chuckled.

"Yes, I believe that you have read her works in the past. She wrote the book, Stormwind Mountain Villa, which was highly acclaimed for the past two months."

"I enjoyed that book, especially the calm Lady Sissi," Audrey replied with a faint smile.

Meanwhile, she was rolling her eyes at her own hypocrisy inwardly.

That was because her latest hobby had nothing to do with novels. She had stopped reading Stormwind Mountain Villa a month ago, her progress stopped at the one-third mark.

Ever since she joined the Tarot Club and acquainted herself with the powerful Fool, and became a real Beyonder, she had been immersing herself in mysticism knowledge. She had been systematically learning about psychology and had lost interest in other activities.

Smiling, Glaint guided Audrey to a sofa in the hall.

"I am sure that Miss Fors Wall will leave a good impression on you, for she is just like Stormwind Mountain Villa's Lady Sissi—calm, intellectual, and lazy.

"Also, my dear Miss Audrey, are you going to play the piano for us later? That is the greatest compliment for a novel and literature."

Audrey looked at the side profile of Glaint's face. His expression, tone, and body language all conveyed his intention to flaunt himself.

He wants to use me to show off… Audrey thought to herself, as if she had just met this good friend of hers for the first time.

She maintained her elegant smile and said, "My music teacher, Mr. Vicanell the pianist, said that my standards have deteriorated recently and needs more practice."

"Alright." Glaint was just about wondering what to say when he suddenly saw a lady taking desserts from the long table. "Audrey, this is Miss Fors Wall, the author of Stormwind Mountain Villa."

Audrey looked over. Miss Fors Wall was about 23 years old and 1.65 meters in height. She was wearing a pale yellow dress with frills. Her brown hair was slightly curly. She looked over with her pale blue eyes as Glaint introduced her while wearing a smile that appeared ruminative.

Audrey had noticed several small details in the less than three seconds of observation.

There are faint traces of yellow on Miss Fors's fingers… She likes cigarettes…

There are obvious calluses on her fingers at spots used to hold a pen, fitting her identity as an author…

Her arm movements show that she has decent strength. This is not a quality expected of an author, unless she is passionate about exercising. Perhaps she was born like this, or she might have engaged in some other occupation in the past…

She displayed her calm, rational, and precise style in Stormwind Mountain Villa. This must be linked to her previous occupation…

Her eyes and emotions are relaxed, giving me the feeling that she is looking down on me and Glaint. Is this the psychological superiority a Beyonder has over an ordinary human?

If it was a coincidence that Glaint discovered her identity as a Beyonder, then she should feel some anxiety and uneasiness. After all, she is unable to guess his reaction and what he would do next since the unknown always brings about fear.

This indicates that she was the one who voluntarily approached Glaint, having learned about our hobbies. She must be quite confident about what is going to happen next…

Why would a Beyonder approach Glaint? Does she need monetary support, or the Beyonder ingredients stored in the treasury? Or perhaps she needs help with something…

At this moment, Glaint was introducing Audrey to Fors.

"Madam, this is the Miss Audrey that I mentioned previously, the most sparkling gem in all of Backlund. Her father is Count Hall, a trusted aide of His Majesty and respected member of the cabinet.

"Good afternoon, Madam Fors. Stormwind Mountain Villa is still seated by my bed to this very day." Audrey adhered to the rules of the aristocracy and curtsied.

But she added silently, *That's because I haven't finished reading it even after a month…*

Fors returned the niceties simply and said, "Good afternoon Miss Audrey, your beauty sure leaves an impression. I think that I already have an idea for my next novel. Heh, Viscount Glaint said that you have exceptional talents in music."

They merely exchanged praises as they were in public.

After watching Fors continue towards the dining table as she targeted a cream cake, Audrey retracted her gaze and headed to the living room with Glaint.

She recalled the details she had seen just now and tried to figure the motives of the woman. She wanted to gain some advantage in future conversations.

As she took a step forward, Audrey, who was as calm as an objective Spectator, stepped on her dress and nearly fell.

At this moment, her personal maidservant, Annie, caught her, allowing her to maintain her grace.

"Miss, the unique design of this dress means that you cannot walk too quickly," Annie pulled close to Audrey's ear and reminded her softly.

"I know." Audrey nodded in reply, her face flushed red.

I was too absorbed in observing others that I forgot to look at where I was placing my foot… she silently complained in resentment.

Audrey met with many other esteemed authors, critics, and musicians for the rest of the salon, always maintaining her sweet, elegant smile.

Finally, after her facial muscles began turning sore, she saw Viscount Glaint's signal.

She waited for a few minutes and gave the excuse of needing to use the washroom. She lifted her dress and stood up slowly to leave the salon.

After confirming that there was no one tailing her, she made her way to the study on the first level and told her maidservant Annie, "I have something to discuss with Glaint. Guard the door for me. Do not let anyone enter."

"Alright." Annie didn't feel that the request was strange, for she knew that Audrey and Viscount Glaint shared similar hobbies and would often discuss mysticism in a private setting.

Audrey entered the study and locked the door. She saw Glaint seated behind the desk while playing with a pen. Fors Wall was standing in front of the bookshelf, nonchalantly flipping through a book.

"I'll introduce you both again. Madam Fors, a true Beyonder." Glaint put down his pen and walked over.

"Is that so?" Audrey intentionally exaggerated her feelings of doubt.

Fors returned the book to its original position and turned around with a smile.

"It looks like I have to prove myself."

She walked over to the door and extended her right palm, grabbing the handle of the door.

Suddenly, Audrey's vision blurred. It was as if she witnessed Madam Fors turn incorporeal as she passed through the door.

She was shocked. Concentrating, she realized that Fors was no longer standing in her original position.

A few seconds later, the door handle turned. The locked door was opened just like that. Fors Wall smiled as she walked in from the outside. Audrey's maid, Annie, who was not far away, didn't seem to be aware of what had happened.

"What a magical ability!" Glaint exclaimed.

Audrey took in a deep breath and said, "I have no more doubts."

At the same time, the ability Fors had displayed allowed Audrey to confirm what her true motives were, since acquiring money or materials would be no trouble for a Beyonder like that.

Glaint doesn't have any Beyonder guards… Fors wants to use the statuses and resources available to Glaint and I to achieve something? Audrey tried her hardest to act as a Spectator.

Fors chortled and said, "Let us interact with honesty. We do not have much time left."

"I was once a doctor at a clinic and was given an opportunity to become a Beyonder. That was more than two years ago."

"I hope that you can do something for me, and the reward I will give you is allow you to join the ranks of true Beyonders. I will sell you the formula of a particular Sequence potion and its corresponding materials."

Upon hearing such a promise, Glaint could not help but ask, "What do you want us to do?"

"I have a partner who's in jail now, awaiting the final verdict. I hope that you can save her, regardless of the methods used," Fors said simply.

Audrey frowned.

"Madam Fors, the abilities you have demonstrated should be better suited for the task…"

Fors laughed and shook her head.

"No, that is not the case. She cannot pass through the places that I can. I can only go in regularly and chat with her.

"Also, I think that risking my life to save her is not a good idea. Life is short, but there is much for us to do."

Audrey observed Fors's face and body language. She considered her words before asking, "I understand. What crime is your partner being locked up for?"

Fors's expression immediately turned a little awkward.

"My partner is a very respected person who can make others comply from the bottom of their hearts. She is of good character and kind. Well… Uh… It was that the means she used to convince a thug was a little over the top…"

…

After handing out the mission, Klein followed his original schedule of mysticism lessons in the morning and combat lessons in the afternoon. The regularity of his life almost made him forget that he was a member of the Nighthawks. The 'curse' of often encountering supernatural incidents seemed to disappear as well.

It was Saturday, his turn to guard Chanis Gate.

"You can enjoy the coffee I left here or the black tea in the clerk's office." Dunn surveyed the room with his deep gray eyes.

Klein, who had already given an excuse to his siblings, nodded in joy.

"Alright Captain. You sure are a generous gentleman."

Dunn laughed.

"Those will help you relax. Being tense all the time is not good for your health."

He took his hat and cane and walked toward the door.

As he was exiting the door, he suddenly turned around and said, "I forgot to remind you; do not open Chanis Gate no matter what you hear, unless it is opened from the inside.

"Remember, no matter what you hear, no matter what happens."

Captain, that's a little scary… Klein tensed up instantly. He felt the darkness of the basement triumph over the light of the gas lamp.

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CHAPTER 108
DEEP INTO THE NIGHT

Despite not being dawn yet, the well-ventilated but quiet and dark underground was illuminated by gas lamps. The dim yellow light emitted from the gas lamps were protected by glass, allowing them to steadily shine throughout the empty and quiet tunnel.

Klein sat in the duty room and casually flipped through the newspapers, magazines, and books piled before him. He directed some of his attention outside, to prevent anyone from charging inside the Chanis Gate.

His windbreaker and top hat were hung on the clothes rack near the entrance while his cane was leaning against the wall where it could be easily retrieved.

The rich aroma of coffee filled the air, and Klein couldn't help but take a whiff. He massaged his temples to fight against the heavy head feeling he was experiencing and the weariness of his body.

As a college student back on Earth, he often slept at five in the morning and woke up at noon. In the past two to three years of his working life, he often stayed up all night, to the point of being able to attend work energetically the next day. However, it was all thanks to the games that were too exhilarating, novels that were too interesting, television shows and movies that were too entertaining.

This world obviously didn't possess any of the necessities needed for staying up all night.

"Seriously, Emperor Roselle. If you want to posture, do it properly. Pour your limited life into an unlimited enterprise. Lead the people of this world into the information age!" Klein muttered silently. He could only console himself that there were at least newspapers, magazines, and increasingly interesting novels.

At first, he wanted to focus on his studies to restrain his sleepiness. However, practically speaking, it conflicted with his duty. Once he entered that state, he would easily overlook any movements outside and any changes to the situation at the Chanis Gate.

Phew. Klein picked up his coffee cup and carefully blew at it.

He took a sip and let the fragrant taste swish around his mouth before letting the liquid slowly flow down his throat.

"Fermo Coffee from the Paz Valley, very bitter but very refreshing," Klein gave a compliment and put down his coffee cup.

The Paz Valley was located in the Southern Continent, a region that produced high-quality coffee beans. It was currently being fought over by the Intis Republic and the Loen Kingdom. They both built colonist settlements on the left and right banks of the Paz Valley, and had destroyed the original Paz Kingdom.

In the eerie silence, Klein casually picked up a magazine and realized that it was Ladies Aesthetic, which talked about fashion and dating.

"This must be from Rozanne…" he murmured in amusement as he flipped through it with his interest piqued.

Maybe it was due to the sudden advancement of camera technology in the past decade or so, not only did the magazine use a lot of illustrations, it even used monochrome pictures as their content—just like the newspapers.

They fashionably invited the famous play and musical actors to model the charms and the magical pairing of the clothing. In a short span of seven years, the new regional Backlund magazine became a mainstream magazine that spread across the nation.

"The dress looks nice, she's pretty too…" Klein flipped through it casually and didn't hide his aesthetic inclinations.

He was a man that had matured normally both in body and mind. He had always appreciated beautiful ladies, but he had long set his goal—to find a way home. Hence, he tried his best to keep his distance from the opposite sex, so that he didn't waste the other person's time or leave behind any emotional baggage.

As for streetwalkers, he was quite a germaphobe in that aspect.

Benson and Melissa were already shackles that couldn't be removed. He could only find the means to make it up to them in the future… Klein suddenly felt his heart heavy and he couldn't help but let out a sigh.

The further he strayed away from home, the more he felt melancholic during quiet late nights.

He suddenly lost his interest in looking at beautiful women and put down the magazine in his hands. He picked up a novel instead.

"Stormwind Mountain Villa, author, Fors Wall," Klein read the content on the cover.

The tranquil night, dim yellow light, and the leatherbound book reminded him of his younger days when he rented books. Hence, he continued to read simply because of nostalgia.

Stormwind Mountain Villa was a novel about Lady Sissi, who was 1.65 meters tall and weighed ninety-eight pounds. It was a story of her embarking as a home tutor in the Fruys Mountain Villa.

"One pound is about half a kilogram… Is this Jane Eyre of an alternate world?" Klein caressed his fingers against the smooth paper as he began making guesses of the subsequent content.

However, just as he thought it was a romance novel, an evil spirit emerged in the story. When he believed that it was a ghost story, Lady Sissi revealed herself as a detective and made a marvelous deduction.

Just as Klein felt that it was definitely a detective novel, the main male character took a heavy blow to the head and lost his memory. Then, it became a heart-rending drama.

"… In the end, it's still a romance book." Klein closed the book and drank a mouthful of coffee.

Thump!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

A ferocious knocking was suddenly heard as it reverberated in the dim and quiet empty corridor.

Klein jumped in shock as he immediately turned tense.

He instinctively drew his revolver from his armpit holster, adjusted the cylinder and hammer. Then, he slowly walked to the door and looked for the source of the sound.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The thumping became more and more intense. Klein looked in the direction of the sound and saw the black outward-swinging gates that were engraved with seven Sacred Emblems.

"Sounds from beyond the Chanis Gate?" He squinted his eyes and his heart was beating like a drum.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein saw Chanis Gate shake gently, and he sensed the massive impact it was withstanding.

"It can't be, right… I'm encountering something on my first day on duty? Did I get an unlucky constitution after I transmigrated?" Klein's right hand broke into cold sweat as it held the revolver.

Very soon, he recalled the Captain's instruction: do not open Chanis Gate no matter what you hear, unless it is opened from the inside.

Uh, could this be a normal phenomenon? Klein suddenly calmed down.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Thump! Thump! Thump! The commotion beyond the Chanis Gate grew in intensity, but the heavy black metal gates only shook. Otherwise, it didn't show any unusual signs.

"This is normal. I nearly died from the shock…" Klein muttered, before he prepared to return to the duty room.

Just then, he heard a sharp grinding noise. He looked at the heavy Chanis Gate bulging outwards as a crack appeared on in its surface!

Zing!

In the jarring noise, Klein's almost fixed eyes saw a figure. Its height was about the length of a man's arm, and it was wearing a classic, black, miniaturized regal gown. There was an obvious stain on the gown.

It had a not-so-exquisite face, black eyes, and tightly sealed lips.

It was a cloth puppet, a toy cloth puppet!

At that moment, when Klein was about to subconsciously raised his gun to take aim, the cloth puppet leaned heavily into the crack in Chanis Gate and unfurled the paper it was holding.

There were many mysterious symbols on the paper, some that Klein knew and some that he had yet to learn. Together, they formed a vertical eye!

Klein had yet to understand the situation when the regal-gowned puppet was suddenly dragged back by a shapeless force to the back of Chanis Gate!

Creak!

Chanis Gate closed once again, with no more knocking or pounding sounds.

The basement regained its tranquility and silence as though nothing had happened.

"I have to inform Captain that Chanis Gate was opened from the inside… But it closed itself…" At that moment, Klein's mental facilities returned to him as he felt alarm, fear, and doubt.

A few seconds later, he recalled what the cloth puppet was. Since he was an official member of the Nighthawks, he was given the clearance to know about the Grade 3 Sealed Artifact sealed behind Chanis Gate.

"Number: 0625.

"Name: Misfortune Cloth Puppet.

"Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people.

"Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

"Sealing method: Only needs to be separated from humans.

"Description: The cloth puppet is wearing a regal gown which was popular in around the year 1300. The gown has a stain that is almost impossible to remove. It is uncertain if the stain was present from the very beginning.

"In a few tragic cases of individual family financial crises recorded in Tingen, the police noticed the existence of the puppet. It was always placed in the children's bedroom, on the side table next to the bed.

"A few Nighthawks accepted the request and started an investigation on the puppet.

"The initial evaluation determined that it brought misfortune, causing people around it to be unlucky and find themselves in danger. Finally, they would die one after another. It only took two weeks for the tester to reach the brink of bankruptcy.

"The puppet doesn't have any living traits. It doesn't have any inclinations of escaping the seal.

"Through extended periods of experimentation, we discovered that as long as one does not come within ten meters of it for more than half an hour a day, one wouldn't be tainted with misfortune. If misfortune has befallen someone, the person will immediately have his situation turn for the better as long as the misfortune is transferred to another person.

"Appendix: The puppet first appeared in the house of an old lady, Tess, who lived in the Lower Street of Iron Cross Street. She was a toymaker. Due to old age and her husband's severe illness, with both her children passing on early, she had no choice but to move to the Iron Cross Street's Lower Street.

"This was the last toy she sold. She exchanged the puppet for some poison hemlock and ended her and her husband's lives, having starved for more than three days."

As Klein recalled the information of Sealed Artifact 3-0625, he felt even more doubtful and horrified.

Didn't it say the puppet doesn't have living traits? Didn't it say that it doesn't have any inclinations of escaping the seal?

What did I see just now!?

What dragged it back in the end?

The symbol that was drawn on the paper that it unfurled, what does it mean?

That scene earlier was like how a psychotic murderer deals with his victim as the victim slams on the gates heavily and cries for help desperately, only to be dragged back…

While these thoughts flooded him, Klein decided not to make any decision on his own.

He returned to the duty room and pulled a rope.

The rope tightened, the gear spun, and there was suddenly a hurried ringtone that rang on the second floor of the Blackthorn Security Company.

Leonard Mitchell and the other Sleepless who were playing cards in the recreation room immediately put down their poker cards and ran to the basement.

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CHAPTER 109
DEDUCTION

The sound of running footsteps entered Klein's ears, calming him down as he stood at the entrance of the guard room.

Leonard arrived first, holding a revolver. He asked in a solemn voice, "What happened?"

Watching Leonard struggle to stop, Klein suddenly thought of something that Rozanne had mentioned in the past. Three years ago, Leonard, who had just become a Sleepless, tried to run down the flight of stairs despite not having adapted to the potion's power, causing him to fall and roll down.

With a cough, Klein pointed at Chanis Gate and said, "There was a knocking noise from the inside, which then became a loud slamming noise. Then the door was pushed open a little."

"Chanis Gate was pushed open?" the short Kenley asked in shock.

"Yes, a slit was opened." Klein continued his description. He saw that Leonard, Kenley, and Royale had stopped approaching the guard room, instead forming an arc formation a few steps away, loosely surrounding Klein.

He paused for a moment before asking, "Are you suspicious of me?"

"No, it isn't suspicion. This is protocol." Kenley shook his head.

In this tense atmosphere, Leonard maintained his flippant attitude, laughing as he added, "There have been incidents like this in other churches. The

Beyonder guarding Chanis Gate lost control and pulled the bell before killing two teammates who came to help."

"Alright." Klein no longer felt angry and aggrieved at being ostracized. Instead, he asked, "Then how should I prove that I haven't lost control?"

Leonard wiped away his flippant smile and tapped his chest four times. With a hoarse voice, he recited softly, "Lacking clothes and food, they have no shelter in the cold.

"They are drenched by rains, and huddle around the rocks for lack of shelter.

"They are orphans snatched from the breast, hope lost on them; they are the poor that have been forced off the proper path.

"The Evernight did not forsake them, but bestowed them with love."

…

The holy, yet pitiful prayer reverberated around the basement, making the bodies, hearts, and souls of everyone present feel purified and tranquil.

Seeing Klein not display any abnormal reactions, Leonard stopped his recital and smiled.

"There's no problem. You are still our trusted partner."

Madam Royale, who had been quiet all this time, looked at Chanis Gate and asked, "What did you see when the gate was pushed open?"

"I saw a Misfortune Cloth Puppet, the one wearing the black classic regal gown, 3-0625," Klein replied, still a little fearful. "But three seconds later, a formless power pulled it back and Chanis Gate was closed once again. What's going on?"

Leonard, Kenley, and Royale exchanged looks.

"Heh heh, we are in the same boat as you. We don't know the true cause. But since Chanis Gate is closed once again and there's nothing unusual, we shouldn't enter it at this time. We have to wait till dawn for the Captain."

Royale calmly added, "I will wait here and guard the gate with you."

"Alright." Leonard moved his hand and gave a bantering laugh. "As the most powerful person here, I shall stay too. Kenley, return to the second floor just in case the police department has an emergency case and cannot open the door."

Kenley didn't say much, he just nodded immediately and left.

Leonard glanced at Klein and Royale.

"Perhaps we can continue our card game? It's best to have some sort of entertainment in circumstances like this, to relax."

"No problem." Klein adjusted his revolver and put it back into his armpit holster. Royale didn't voice an opinion, but instead stroked her smooth, black hair as she entered the guard room.

While playing Fighting the Landlord, no—Fighting Evil, Klein said casually, "Misfortune Cloth Puppet, I mean 3-0625, according to its description, doesn't have any living traits…"

"Haha, three aces." Leonard showed his hand and replied with the same casual tone, "In the past forty years, 3-0625 hasn't displayed any life-like characteristics. We can first assume that the information is correct and make our assumptions based on that."

"Pass. You already have an idea?" Royale asked simply.

As Klein hesitated to think about whether he should throw his three deuces, Leonard took a sip of his freshly brewed coffee and said, "Yes, since 3-0625 shouldn't have any life-like characteristics, then its actions today must have been influenced by some other factor. This factor must also be rather recent; otherwise, we would've observed this phenomenon a long time ago."

"Has there been anything different about Chanis Gate over the last month?"

Royale saw Klein toss his three deuces and pondered for a few seconds.

"There is only one thing different; the Antigonus family's notebook and the Sealed Artifact 2-049 was stored behind Chanis Gate for a night."

Leonard looked at the cards in his hand and as he tapped the table, he said with a smile, "If 2-049 can make the Misfortune Cloth Puppet act abnormally, then something similar should have happened behind Backlund's Chanis Gate a long time ago. So I suspect that the problem lies with the Antigonus family's notebook."

Klein thought for a moment and nodded.

"That is the most likely explanation… Leonard, I never expected you to be this good at deduction."

Typically speaking, being a romantic poet and a person with excellent deductive skills was mutually exclusive…

"That's because he's recently into detective novels," Royale explained indifferently. "Two Kings, a straight from 8 to King. Does no one want it? Three 6's and no more."

Upon seeing this, Klein and Leonard fell silent.

Having not been concentrating on the game, they forget something important.

Royale was the 'Evil' in this round!

Watching Royale cut the deck, Klein took the opportunity to ask, "Then what power pulled 3-0625 back?"

Leonard glanced at him and chuckled.

"Do you really think that the defensive mechanisms behind Chanis Gate only consists of the buried sealed chamber and a few elderly keepers?

"In reality, when the sun sets fully, the keepers would have already left Chanis Gate and returned to Saint Selena Cathedral.

"The power in the gate is strongest at night and is no longer safe for any living creature. The power only weakens when the sun rises again. That is also why the Captain asked us not to enter Chanis Gate no matter what we hear."

In other words, the Captain had forgotten to tell me the reason… Klein thought for a bit before asking, "Defensive mechanisms such as nexus formations?"

Like magnified versions of amulets and charms?

"Yes." Royale nodded as she stroked the edge of her cards. "There is a reason that Chanis Gates are placed in the central cathedral of each city. The gate is maintained by the followers that go to these churches every day. Their sincere prayers allow a part of their spirituality to enter the nexus formations, and from small contributions comes abundance."

"I see…" Klein nodded as he saw that he had a lousy hand.

At that moment, Leonard laughed and said, "There isn't just one defensive mechanism behind Chanis Gate. Saint Selena's ashes are buried inside. She was a High-Sequence Beyonder when she was still alive."

The ashes of Saint Selena? Ashes of a High-Sequence Beyonder? Sacred ashes? What use do those have? Klein was as puzzled as he was curious.

Saint Selena was a devotee when the Church of the Evernight Goddess was being established. She was active during the Third Epoch and her deeds were written in many holy scriptures. Thus, Saint Selena was a fairly commonly-used name among the commoners who believed in the Evernight Goddess.

Leonard seemed to read Klein's mind as he continued, "Rumors suggest that the skeleton or ashes of High-Sequence Beyonders still contain incredible power. Of course, those are just rumors."

Klein nodded, focusing his attention on the cards in his hand.

There were no unusual incidents in Chanis Gate for the next few hours, but Klein lost exactly two soli. It pained his heart, but Leonard, who fully expressed his romantic poetic vibes while playing, lost four soli and five pence, leaving Royale as the undisputed winner.

"The sun has just risen, it's my turn." The quiet Author, Madam Seeka Tron entered the guard room at six.

Klein wrote the incident he encountered the previous night into the record book and returned to the Blackthorn Security Company with Leonard and Royale.

He felt unusually exhausted, but the Midnight Poet and Sleepless beside him remained energetic.

This is the difference between the different Sequences… Klein was just about to make his way past the partition and catch up on some sleep at home when he suddenly saw the Captain enter.

"Good morning, Captain." He couldn't help but yawn when he greeted him.

Dunn, who was in a black windbreaker, took off his hat and looked at him with his gray eyes.

"Good morning. You should head back home for some rest. Did anything happen last night?"

Klein immediately gave a succinct summary of the incident regarding the Misfortune Cloth Puppet and Leonard's deduction.

"Okay." Dunn didn't give his opinion. He concentrated on making his way to his office. "I will send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral."

Klein didn't stay any longer. He slowly walked out of 36 Zouteland Street and breathed in the cool morning air.

He felt a little more energized, suddenly remembering something he had forgotten all this time.

I forgot to tell the Captain and the rest about the piece of paper in the Misfortune Cloth Puppet's hands!

How could I have forgotten?

It was as if some power was influencing me, stopping me from telling this to the other Nighthawks…

It has been some time since the Antigonus family's notebook was present at Chanis Gate. The Misfortune Cloth Puppet 3-0625 should have been affected long ago. Why did it only show abnormal behavior last night?

Was it because it was the first time I was on shift at Chanis Gate?

It used all of its power to show me the picture on the paper?

What is the motive of the Antigonus family's notebook?

Has it got to do with my survival despite making contact with it? And that I became a Seer?

…

Many suspicions flashed through Klein's brain, rooting him to the spot. He was unsure if he should pretend that he didn't remember anything and make his way home to sleep, or head up and report it to the Captain.

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CHAPTER 110
CONFIRMATION

After thinking for a while, Klein decided to return home to confirm something.

He believed that if the Misfortune Cloth Puppet hadn't intentionally shown him the picture on the paper, then the Captain and the rest would definitely find traces in their follow-up investigations. It wouldn't matter much if he reported it or not.

If it were the converse, it was something worth careful consideration.

That was also what Klein wanted to confirm.

He took the trackless public carriage to Daffodil Street. When he returned home, his brother Benson and his sister Melissa had yet to wake up, since it was Sunday. The living room was dark and quiet.

Klein boiled a kettle of water, threw in some tea leaves, and drank it with wheat bread. Then he took his coat, hat, and cane towards the stairs.

He subconsciously lightened his footsteps to avoid making any loud noises.

Just as he got to the second floor, he saw the bathroom door suddenly open, and Melissa, who was wearing an old dress, came out with a sleepy face.

"You're home…" Melissa was rubbing her eyes sleepily.

Klein covered his mouth and yawned.

"Yeah, I need to crash. Don't wake me up before lunch."

Melissa tersely acknowledged when she suddenly recalled something.

"Benson and I are going to Saint Selena Cathedral pray and attend Mass in the morning. Lunch might be slightly later."

As not-so-devoted believers of the Evernight Goddess, she and Benson went to the church once a fortnight, while Klein, who was a Nighthawk, hadn't entered the church since the last time he was followed by the member of the Secret Order.

No, I'm at the cathedral every day, just that I'm in the cathedral's basement… Klein justified himself subconsciously.

He was currently most worried that the Goddess would abandon him as a fake believer. If his ritualistic magic didn't respond at crucial times, he would be in big trouble.

But then, when one considers Old Neil, the Goddess is quite forgiving towards the Nighthawks. Hmm. That's right! Klein comforted himself.

His scattered thoughts flashed past him, and he looked at Melissa. He nodded and smiled.

"No problem. I can sleep longer then."

Walking past Melissa, he entered his bedroom and locked the door behind him.

Immediately following that, he psyched himself up and took out the ritual dagger and created a sealed spirituality wall.

He took four steps counterclockwise while reciting the incantation and withstood the chaotic roars before appearing above the gray fog.

In the illusionary boundless world, he was the only living spirit sitting on the seat of honor at the long bronze table.

For nearly a minute of silence, Klein conjured a piece of goatskin parchment and wrote down a divination incantation.

"The picture that the Misfortune Cloth Puppet displayed."

Although Klein had seen the mysterious picture on the paper clearly for a split moment last night, he only managed to remember the rough shape of the picture due to his anxiety. But that wasn't a problem for a Seer; he could reproduce anything he remembered and had seen once!

According to mysticism theory, one's spirituality could remember everything they had seen. As long as they possessed the appropriate method, they could reproduce the scene whenever they wished.

Klein even felt that the theory that Spirit Medium Daly described regarding the Psychology Alchemists made sense. Human memory was merely islands that were exposed above the sea; it couldn't withstand much. Hence, a person's spiritual essence remembered most of the information and turned it into the subconscious, which formed the entire ocean.

While spirituality itself, even if it wasn't the entire ocean, also included the entire sea region surrounding the island.

After reciting the divination incantation, Klein leaned backwards and fell asleep through Cogitation.

In the blurry, distorted, separated world, he saw Chanis Gate crack open once again as he heard the heavy grinding noises.

The puppet in the black classic regal gown leaned into the opening of the door and unfurled the paper that it was holding.

On the piece of paper, there were many mysterious symbols that collectively formed a vertical eye.

Klein carefully observed the picture before exiting the dream. Then, with the aid of the uniqueness of the world above the gray fog and the memory that had yet to fade, he expressed the image on the brown parchment.

The vertical eye looked up at him, looking both sinister and mysterious.

Klein thought and wrote below the eye, "This is key to the treasure that the Antigonus family left behind."

Putting down the pen, he untied the silver chain that was wound inside his sleeve. As he held it with his left hand, the topaz pendulum stably hung above the divination statement and the mysterious vertical eye. There weren't any obvious movements.

Klein closed his eyes and recited the sentence with his mind cleared.

After seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz spinning in small circles in a clockwise fashion along with the silver chain.

That meant affirmation.

The vertical eye picture is really key to the treasure that the Antigonus family left behind.… Klein nodded in deep thought.

He tapped his fingers on the edge of the long bronze table and muttered to himself, "Because of Ray Bieber's death, there are no descendants of the Antigonus family left. Hence, the notebook views me, the Seer that interacted with it but remains alive, as its inheritor?

"It affected 3-0625 and left the key to the treasure with it, only to show it to me during my shift at Chanis Gate?

"There doesn't seem to be any problem with the logic, but it still doesn't seem very convincing.

"How could the notebook be sure that there are no more descendants of the Antigonus family?

"And I am totally unrelated to that family… If I shared their bloodline, the original Klein wouldn't have committed suicide to begin with.

"Hmm, it doesn't seem to matter if I tell this to the Captain and the team. Let me look into this."

Klein then divined the location of the Antigonus family's treasure. But, unsurprisingly, there was no detailed information. Just like in the letter that Sirius wrote to Mr. Z, Klein could only be certain that the treasure was related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range and the ancient Nation of the Evernight.

After he finished divining all the matters, Klein noticed that the crimson star from which he had previously heard prayers was producing a faint fluctuation again.

He used the method of answering prayers and touched the illusory star. He saw the brown-haired young man who wore the unique black tight suit again.

The young man was kneeling on the ground, facing the pure crystal ball, still muttering about something.

Klein, who had purposely learned some Jotun, finally understood one of the sentences.

"Pray… Save… Father and Mother."

It really is Jotun… Where in the world is Jotun still used? That's an ancient antique that is thousands of years old… What a pity; the mysterious ruler

above the gray fog is totally powerless. I don't have the ability to save them even if I want to… Klein shook his head and sighed. He decided to observe him for a little longer.

I'll see what I can do when I master more Jotun vocabulary and can understand what happened to his father and mother… Klein retracted his spirituality, wrapped it around himself, and initiated a descent.

When he returned to his bedroom, he dispelled the spirituality wall, changed into old but comfortable clothing, and laid down on the bed to get some sleep.

Klein slept all the way till half-past twelve, which was when Melissa finished preparing lunch and came knocking on the door.

After having a fairly sumptuous meal, he saw Melissa bring out her new dress and fishnet hat, looking like she was going out.

"Do you still have something this afternoon?" Klein asked, puzzled.

Benson was seated on the sofa, knitting his eyebrows at his grammar books. He didn't lift his head but answered on her behalf, "Mrs. Shaud from next door told Melissa that there will be a lecture regarding family affairs in the municipal hall in the afternoon. Melissa plans to attend it and learn how to deal with daily household issues."

Melissa nodded and said, "I got Selena and Elizabeth to join me."

"That's nice. I hope that the lecturer tells you that a family like us needs to hire at least one maidservant," Klein joked.

Noticing that Melissa was about to refute him, he immediately added, "We have to invest our limited time into more valuable matters."

Melissa was stunned. After a while, she puckered her lips, put on her fishnet hat, and left the house.

…

At two in the afternoon, Klein arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company again.

Rozanne and Dunn Smith, who happened to be in the reception hall, asked in unison, "Didn't you go home and rest?"

Klein smiled.

"I was going to go to the Divination Club, but I kept thinking about what happened last night, so I decided to come over here first. Has there been any reply from the Holy Cathedral?"

Dunn shot a glance at Rozanne and turned around silently. He walked past the partition and entered his office.

Rozanne pulled her face at his back, then muttered angrily, "Seriously, Captain…"

Well done! Klein complimented silently. He held back his laughter and followed Dunn into his office.

Klein shut the door, and Dunn sniffed his smoking pipe before he said, "The Holy Cathedral has determined that the disturbance was because of the Antigonus family notebook, which they reclassified as a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. It's a pity. That means that you no longer have the sufficient security clearance to read it."

Grade 1. Highly dangerous. Only the ranks above bishops and Nighthawk team captains can know of the actual situation? That also means that Captain has no idea what's happening… Highly dangerous, no wonder… Klein felt regretful yet relaxed.

Dunn gave him a glance and continued, "The Holy Cathedral told us to check if there are any other items behind Chanis Gate that were

contaminated by the notebook. After verification, only 3-0625 was abnormal, and we have already changed its seal."

"Did you discover anything else?" Klein pretended to ask curiously.

Dunn shook his head.

"No."

Klein nodded in thought. He didn't continue with the topic. After some small talk, he bade farewell and left for the Divination Club to continue his 'journey of digestion'.

…

In the municipal hall.

The three best friends, Melissa, Selena, and Elizabeth, sat near the door, waiting for the lecture to begin.

"If she delivers a bad lecture, we'll sneak out," Selena suggested excitedly.

Elizabeth immediately agreed, "Let's go shopping at Harrods."

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CHAPTER 111
LETTING SLIP

Sometime later, the lecturer, who had relatively high cheekbones, walked up the wooden podium. She cleared her throat and said, "Good morning, kind, charitable ladies. I am Xaviera Hedda. What I am about to share with you today are my experiences in managing family expenses. There are three parts, the first being how a family with an annual income of a hundred pounds should balance food, housing, clothing, and employing helpers. The second would be where a family earning two hundred pounds yearly should be increasing their expenditure to appear more decent…"

Melissa listened attentively. She had her brothers' annual income at her fingertips.

It's already over two hundred pounds… she thought, half in relief and half in fear.

She was relieved and satisfied with her current life, but was also afraid that this way of life would vanish in the blink of an eye.

At this point, the wine red-haired Selena covered her mouth. She told her two friends quietly, "She seems to be a believer of the Lord of Storms. She's wearing a Windstorm badge."

Melissa looked over and saw Xaviera wearing a badge depicting violent winds and tumultuous waves on her left chest.

She quickly explained, "Mrs. Shaud who told me about this seminar is also a follower of the Lord of Storms. I don't think it's strange that the speaker is a follower too."

"Yeah, I don't think there is a problem here. We are here to learn how to budget," Elizabeth concurred with Melissa.

"But other than Melissa, we don't need to, nor do we have the right to govern our families' finances." Selena pouted.

Elizabeth rebutted without hesitation, "But we'll get married eventually and form our own families."

Selena had been a little afraid of Elizabeth after the incident of the demon mirror divination. She nodded in embarrassment and pretended to listen to the lecture attentively.

The lecturer, Xaviera, raised her right hand and said, "The premise of any form of budgeting is to respect the opinion of the man of the household. They are the source of income, the pillar of the family. They face anxiety, stress, troubles, and disorder in society in order to obtain everything for us. Thus, we have to create a serene home, one free from troubles from the outside. This will allow them to relax when they come home, allow their souls to be cleansed, allow them to be more prepared to face the challenges to come…

"So, as the famous philosopher, sociologist, humanities scholar, and economist Mr. Leumi once said, a woman is the angel of a household."

Selena stroked her cheek and traced her dimples as she whispered with a little excitement, "Leumi, the person who said that humans are born free?"

Elizabeth hesitated before answering. "Yes, but he is a believer of the Lord of Storms."

At this point, the lecturer, Xaviera, continued, "Mr. Leumi also informs us that females are innately flawed when it comes to intelligence and logic. In that case, unable to judge for themselves whether they should accept the judgment of father and husband as that of the church…." [1]

Melissa, Selena, and Elizabeth looked at each other, speechless, after hearing such a description.

"Let's go?" Selena finally suggested.

Melissa and Elizabeth nodded.

"Alright!"

They took their veiled hats and bent over, sneaking over to the side door in an attempt to leave without attracting any attention.

When they cautiously arrived outside and could finally stand up straight, they suddenly heard a burst of applause coming from the small hall.

Melissa instinctively looked back into the hall.

She saw Mrs. Shaud, as well as many other ladies, clapping.

Phew! Praise the Lady… Melissa exhaled. She left the uncomfortable place together with Selena and Elizabeth.

"Shall we go to Harrods?" Selena suggested as she stood under a tree. She had already forgotten about what had just happened.

Melissa fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "I plan on returning home to study."

"Study…" Selena fiddled with her wine-red hair, as if she had returned to her regular life.

"Also, I have to buy bread, beef, potatoes, and fruits… Klein needs to work today, Benson went to the municipal library. So, yeah, I have to go back!" Melissa suddenly realized how much she loved her textbooks, her gears and springs.

Selena decided to keep her distance from the unusually weird Melissa. She turned to look at Elizabeth and smiled dutifully, "Shall we go to Harrods together? Even though I've spent all my savings, it's still wonderful to window shop."

"Sure." Elizabeth accepted the suggestion, then asked casually, "Melissa, does your brother, Klein, have to work on Sundays?"

"Yes, he rests on Mondays, different from ordinary jobs." Melissa unknowingly raised her head slightly.

…

After leaving the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein took a public carriage to Howes Street.

He tried his hardest to suppress his emotions, to not think about the issue of the Antigonus family's treasure. He tried to focus his attention back onto the matter of acting.

It was important to fully digest the potion as soon as possible! Improving himself was extremely important no matter when it was!

Acting as a Seer, heh! I'm not professional enough. The fortune tellers back in the Foodaholic Empire had to go through the almanac all the time before they accomplished anything… Klein held his cane as he sat inside a carriage.

He had decided to divine if it was beneficial for him to travel to the Divination Club today.

That was more befitting of a Seer!

As he was getting off the carriage, Klein took out a halfpence coin. His field of vision narrowed, his pupils becoming darker as he silently recited, *It is suitable to head to the Divination Club today.*

It is suitable to head to the Divination Club today.

…

Dang!

Klein flicked the coin up. He didn't look at the rotation of the coin, calmly extending his hand instead.

Thunk! The halfpence landed in the middle of his palm.

This time, the number 1⁄2 was facing up.

With the number facing up, that means that I would encounter an unfortunate incident at the Divination Club today… Klein thought for a moment before he turned to the opposite side of the street. He waited for the public carriage that was headed for Daffodil Street.

He felt more and more like a charlatan.

…

Howes Street, at the entrance to Harrods Department Store.

Selena was just about to enter the building when she suddenly froze and looked to the side.

"Did something happened?" Elizabeth asked, puzzled.

Selena puffed her cheeks and said, "Elizabeth, I thought about my mysticism teacher, Mr. Vincent. He passed away just like that, the morning after my birthday…"

"Could it be because I peeked and used his secret incantations? I've always felt guilty and uneasy because of this… Besides, I've been rather unlucky recently."

"So?" Elizabeth asked quietly.

Selena bit her lips and said, "I wish to do a divination at the Divination Club over there and see if Mr. Vincent's death had anything to do with me."

From what happened at my birthday banquet… I have this nagging feeling that Elizabeth is hiding something from me… I remember the back of the man in a tuxedo…

"Can't you divine it yourself?" Elizabeth asked in surprise.

Selena sighed, imitating her father.

"Sigh, I cannot divine it given my current condition."

"Alright, let's head to the Divination Club first." Elizabeth agreed to her friend's suggestion.

They headed over to the side and made their way to the Divination Club on the second floor by following the stairs.

"Hello, good afternoon, Miss Angelica. It's a pleasure meeting you again." Selena gave a lively greeting at the reception area.

Angelica smiled and said, "You should be able to find me here as long as you come after lunch."

Selena exchanged niceties before lamenting Hanass Vincent's death, she then said, "I need to have a divination performed."

"You know the rules of the club. Here is the list of members willing to do it… It's the weekend, so most of our members are here," Angelica explained like clockwork.

Selena and Elizabeth huddled their heads together as they scanned the list of names and description together.

"I used to just ask for my teacher directly. To think that the club would have this many members willing to do divinations compared to last year," Selena said excitedly.

Suddenly, she paused for a few seconds and said in puzzlement, "Klein Moretti, Klein Moretti? Isn't this name the same as Melissa's brother?"

Elizabeth froze. She looked repeatedly at the name 'Klein Moretti' and nodded, "That's true…"

"Miss Angelica, is this Mr. Klein Moretti around?" Selena asked with a sparkle in her eyes.

Angelica shook her head.

"My apologies, Mr. Moretti didn't come to the club today."

"Alright, we'll find someone else." Selena didn't mind not seeing the person, but she laughed at her friend. "I know that this can't be Melissa's brother, but having seen this name, I naturally thought of a newspaper; a headline worthy of the Intis Press."

The Intis Press was created by Emperor Roselle, famous for its attention-grabbing headlines. It was one of the most famous newspapers in the Northern Continent.

Elizabeth asked inattentively, "What headline?"

Selena cleared her throat and said, "Is it the decay of morals, or a problem with society? History graduate actually ends up doing divinations over the weekends to make a living!"

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CHAPTER 112
AZIK'S EXPLANATION

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Audrey Hall sat on a suspended chair in a windy corner and looked at the flowers that were blooming under the sun. She thought of Fors Wall's request.

According to Viscount Glaint, there really was a young girl named Xio Derecha being impounded at a temporary prison located in Backlund's North Borough.

She was charged with grievous assault against a decent gentleman due to a financial conflict. She caused the man to be bedridden, and he might not be able to stand on his feet ever again.

Regarding that, Fors's explanation was that the gentleman wasn't a nice person but the head of a gang in Backlund's East Borough. He made a living by being an usury.

The cause of the incident was when one of the borrowers found out that the interest was several times higher than he expected, so much so that it was impossible to return the amount of money even after he bankrupted himself. When his discussion with the gentleman ended fruitless, he found the famous intermediator, Xio Derecha, hoping that she could persuade the other party to waive the unreasonable portion of the loan.

That gentleman didn't respond well to Xio Derecha's attempts at arbitration, and even threatened to capture the borrower's wife and children that night.

Hence, Xio Derecha switched tactics and chose to use physical means. Accidentally, she caused severe damage to the man.

Viscount Glaint investigated the matter and confirmed that Fors Wall was telling the truth. He also confirmed that the gangster had lost control of his underlings. Moreover, after a midnight visit by someone, the borrower's debts were waived. A statement was sent to the prosecutor to plead mercy for Xio Derecha. However, an assault case of such severity wasn't dropped even when the victim decided not to pursue a trial.

"Glaint wished to solve the problem through normal means. He sent people to talk to lawyers that he was familiar with, but they were only confident of winning a lighter sentence, but it would be very difficult to acquit her from the crime unless she obtains a medical certification stating that she is mentally incompetent or mentally undeveloped…" Audrey muttered to herself, leaning in support towards her friend's opinion.

To her, it was best to not have any relationship with Fors Wall and Xio Derecha. Ever since the Tarot Club, Audrey felt that she was no longer an innocent and naive young lady.

"Tomorrow night, there will be a dance at Count Wolf's residence. I should tell Glaint then to act according to the lawyer's suggestion." Audrey nodded slightly as she made a decision.

In the Loen Kingdom, lawyers were either barristers or solicitors. The latter didn't need to be involved in court affairs, and were responsible for gathering evidence, talking to the parties involved, setting up wills on their clients' behalf, supervising property allocation, and providing legal consultation. Of course, they could also represent their clients to attend the most basic magistrate court and defend simple cases.

Barristers, on the other hand, were responsible for researching evidence and defending their clients in court. According to the Loen Kingdom's laws, they had to maintain an objective attitude so they couldn't make direct contact with the litigant. They could only communicate with them through

their assistants, who were solicitors, to gain complete understanding of the situation. They were all true law experts who possessed outstanding communication skills and were skilled in debate.

The relaxed Audrey observed the colorful flowers outside while hidden in the darkness when she recalled something.

Medical certification stating she was mentally incompetent… Psychiatrist…

If the Psychology Alchemists have grasped 'acting', does that mean that they can be found amongst psychiatrists?

Audrey felt that her train of thought was on the correct path, and her eyes shimmered like a lustrous gemstone.

Just then, she saw her golden retriever, Susie sneak behind the flower bushes, to a spot where only the gardener would be able to reach.

Susie… What is she doing? Audrey hid in the shadows and looked in a daze.

The golden retriever's sense of smell seemed to be confused by the flowers all around her that she failed to notice her owner behind her. She opened her mouth and produced sounds that was akin to one's exercising of their voice.

Then, it caused the surrounding air to vibrate into words that were jerky and unmellow.

"Hello.

"How are you?"

…

Audrey's mouth widened as she completely forgot about the etiquette an elegant lady should have. She couldn't believe the scene before her and the

stiff voice that she had just heard.

She suddenly stood up and asked, "Susie, you can talk? When did you learn how to talk?"

The golden retriever jumped in fright as she turned around to look at her owner.

She shook her tail nervously and very quickly. She opened and closed her mouth a few times, vibrating the surrounding air.

"I… I don't know how to explain. I am a dog, after all."

Upon hearing that, Audrey was suddenly at a loss for words.

…

Monday morning, Klein followed his plan to revise and consolidate his mysticism knowledge. Then, he took the public carriage to Khoy University.

He wanted to increase his interactions with Mr. Azik and find out exactly what he knew.

In the three-story gray building of the history department, Klein and his teacher, Cohen Quentin, chatted for a while and exchanged their information regarding the historical ruins on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Having not learned anything new, he seized the opportunity to enter the office diagonally opposite when his mentor left to handle certain matters. He then walked over to Azik's desk. The lecturer had stayed behind to take care of some matters.

"Mr. Azik, can I have a chat with you?" He asked the man with the tanned skin, gentle facial features, and the small mole below his right ear. He took

off his hat and bowed.

With eyes that seemed to have seen the vicissitudes of life, Azik tidied his books and replied, "Sure, let's take a walk by the Khoy's banks."

"Alright." Klein held his cane and followed him out of the three-story gray building.

Along the way, they maintained their silence. Neither of them spoke.

When the flowing river water entered their vision and there were no teachers or students passing by, Azik suddenly stopped in his tracks. He turned his body halfway, faced Klein, and asked, "Is there something I can help you with?"

Klein remained silent for a long while, thinking of several tactful ways of asking his questions, but he gave up on all of them.

Therefore, he spoke frankly and directly asked, "Mr. Azik, you are a trustworthy person, a respectable gentleman. I would like to know what you can see in me, or should I say, what do you know? I am referring to the previous incident when you said that there was something disharmonious in my fate."

Azik put down his cane and sighed as he laughed.

"I never expected you to be so straightforward. I'm quite at a loss how to answer you.

"To be frank, disharmony in your fate was the only thing that I could see. Other than that, I don't know any more than you do."

Klein hesitated and asked, "But how could you tell? I don't believe that this was derived from divination."

Azik looked sideways towards the Khoy River. His intonation was tainted with some bleakness.

"No, Klein, you don't understand. Divination can reach that kind of level. It only depends on the person doing the divination. Of course, my divination was merely an excuse.

"Some people are… special. They are born with some strange ability. I think I am someone like that."

"You think?" Klein acutely caught the word that the other man used.

"Yes, I am not sure if I was born with it. Perhaps, the price of my ability is to forget myself, to forget my past, to forget my parents." Azik's eyes were clouded with melancholy as he looked at the river.

Klein was increasingly confused.

"Forget the past?"

Azik smiled without any humor.

"Before I entered the Backlund University's history department, I lost most of my memory. I only remembered my name and some basic knowledge. Luckily, I still had my identification documents. Otherwise, I probably would have ended up homeless. All these years, I've tried to search for my parents using my identification documents, but I never found anything, even though I could see a corner of Fate.

"During my few years in the university, I gradually realized that I possessed some strange but unique powers, powers that go beyond common sense."

Klein listened attentively and asked, "Mr. Azik, why did you lose your memory? No, I mean—did you find out why you lost your memory?"

He suspected that Mr. Azik was a member of the Life School of Thought who had lost his memories, and that he might even be a Mid-Sequence Beyonder that held an above average position. It was a secret organization that had potion Sequences for Monster and Soothsayer. It was an organization that was mainly passed down through master-disciple relationships.

Azik shook his head vigorously.

"No, it felt like I just had slept, I've forgotten everything that happened in the past."

He walked forward a few steps with his cane in his hand. He spoke as he walked.

"After I left Backlund, I started dreaming. I dreamed about a lot of strange things…"

Dreams? I am good at interpreting dreams! The conversation was entering Klein's domain of expertise as he immediately asked, "What kind of dream?"

Azik let out a muffled laugh and said, "Many different kinds of dreams. Sometimes, I would dream of the internals of a dark mausoleum. I would dream of ancient coffins with corpses in them. They would have white feathers growing out from their backs. Sometimes, I would dream of myself being a knight covered in armor, holding a three-meter-long spear while charging towards the enemy.

"Sometimes, I dream of myself as a feudal lord, having a rich and fertile fief, with a beautiful wife and three children. Sometimes, I dream of myself as a tramp, walking on a muddy road in the rain, feeling cold and hungry.

"Sometimes, I dream of myself having a daughter, a different daughter than the previous children. She would have long smooth black hair, and she enjoys sitting on the swing that I made. She always asks for sweets from

me. Sometimes, I dream of myself standing next to the gallows, looking towards a dead body hanging up there coldly."

Listening to Azik raving like a madman, Klein suddenly realized that he couldn't interpret the dreams because his various dreams symbolized opposite, contradictory things!

Azik retracted his gaze as his voice no longer sounded ethereal.

"The Feynapotter Kingdom in the south believes in Mother Earth, and the Church of Mother Earth promotes a belief. They believe that every life is a plant, absorbing the nutrients from the earth. Growing slowly, prospering, and withering.

"When they wither, these lives fall to the earth and return to the mother's embrace. In the coming year, they grow again. They would blossom then wither, year after year. Life is as such, one life after another.

"Sometimes, I am very willing to believe in this concept. I believe because of my uniqueness, I can dream of previous lives, and the lives before that."

At this point, he looked at Klein and said with a sigh, "I haven't mentioned any of this to Cohen before. The reason I'm telling you is because I…"

Azik paused and smiled.

"I apologize. My description earlier was not precise enough. The disharmony in your fate is not the only thing that I could see. I can also see another thing.

"Klein, you are not an ordinary person anymore. You possess an extraordinary, strange power, one very similar to mine."

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CHAPTER 113
REQUEST

Mr. Azik can tell that I'm a Beyonder? His ability is truly powerful… Klein froze for a moment before he gave an honest reply.

"Yes."

He thought for a while before adding, "Because of what happened to Welch and Naya."

"It's as I thought…" Azik sighed. "There were two people with extraordinary powers amongst the group of police that came to question me and Cohen."

It was probably Captain and Leonard. They were in charge of Welch's case… Klein nodded slightly, not interrupting Azik.

Azik raised his cane and said, "You should have entered their circle. I hope that you can help me search for clues of my origin. You do not need to go out of your way to do it, just note it down if you find any clues."

Upon saying that, Azik wore a bitter smile.

"I don't know any other person with extraordinary powers… You cannot imagine what emotions a man without a past has. You are like a boat floating in a vast ocean. The most terrifying thing is not facing a storm, but not being able to find a harbor. The inability to navigate to shore. All you can do is take on disaster after disaster, with no end in sight, never to feel peace and safety."

No Mr. Azik, I know how it feels, for I am in a similar position. Fortunately for me, I have the memory fragments of the original Klein, as well as Melissa and Benson… Klein answered silently before he asked, "Mr. Azik, why didn't you join a similar group when you possess such magical ability and search for clues yourself?"

Azik looked into Klein's eyes and let out a self-deprecating smile.

"Because I'm afraid. I'm afraid of death."

He sighed and continued, "I have gotten used to life like this. I like my life. I don't have the courage to take that risk, so I can count on you."

Klein didn't say any more. He promised, "I'll pay special attention if I come across any clues."

"Alright, we should return to the office. Let's have lunch together with Cohen when he's done with work. Do you remember? The East Balam Restaurant in the university is quite good. Heh, my treat." Azik lifted his cane and pointed to a direction.

My apologies, I really have no memories of that. How could the studying original Klein have afforded the East Balam Restaurant? Even if Welch was treating, he would still reject going to such an expensive place… Klein pressed on his hat and returned to the third level of the grayish-stone building which housed the history department with Azik.

A few steps later, Azik suddenly spoke.

"I'll be on summer break after I finish settling all my work at the university. You can visit me at my house or write to me."

Klein nodded and said casually, "Mr. Azik, I thought that you would head to Desi Bay for a vacation."

"No, it is too hot in the south right now. I don't like the so-called sunbathing. Look at my skin color; it tans easily. I'd rather head to the Winter County, to the north of the Feysac Empire to ski, sightsee, or hunt seals." Azik, who had a bronze skin tone, smiled as he replied.

I would too… Klein, who had just joined the Nighthawks, revealed a look of envy.

After lunch, Klein returned home and took a nap before beginning his revision and study of charms and amulets. He hoped to grasp them quickly to create objects that could at least be used in battle and help him.

When it was approaching three in the afternoon, Klein packed his stuff and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

…

In the majestic divine hall above the gray fog sat a long, ancient mottled table.

Klein sat at the seat of honor, his face enveloped by the thick fog. He looked at the still-obscured Justice and The Hanged Man as they appeared at their designated seats.

Hmm, Miss Justice's emotions doesn't seem too stable. Worry, unease, and a little lost… Klein observed the only female member of the Tarot Club with his Spirit Vision.

Words couldn't describe Audrey Hall's emotions. She was extremely shocked by Susie's sudden speech.

She had imagined a future with herself as a great detective or famous psychologist bringing along her assistant Susie, but if that became the dog detective Susie bringing along her assistant Miss Audrey, then it would be a little, a little…

No, not a little, it would be straight up weird! It leaves me lost! Audrey suddenly sat up straight. She wanted to request for Mr. Fool's and The Hanged Man's help.

But she swallowed the words she was about to say.

Hmm, how should I ask this? What should I do if my pet is abnormal?

How should I interact with a pet that can speak, one that has decent intelligence?

No, no, no, this is the Tarot Club, not an experience sharing on pets. I bet that the good impression that The Hanged Man and Mr. Fool have of me would shatter if I ask those questions!

Audrey's mind whirled. Finally, she organized her words and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool and Mr. Hanged Man, who has helped me all this time, I have a question to ask. What can a pet with Beyonder powers do for its owner? In other words, how useful is it?"

She had just said her piece when she noticed Mr. Fool and The Hanged Man slip into silence. The atmosphere became a little weird.

Hey hey hey, say something, don't look at me with those eyes, I did nothing! Really, I was asking for a friend! Audrey wanted to burrow into a hole out of shame.

She deeply regretted asking that question.

Considering that she had previously asked what would happen if an ordinary animal consumed a Sequence potion, did she share the potion she formulated with her pet? That seems like something only Miss Justice would do… I feel a little pathetic being the boss of a 'heretic cult' with her as a member… Klein lifted his right hand and propped it against his forehead and pinched it twice without giving an answer.

The Hanged Man Alger Wilson was silent for nearly twenty seconds before he replied in a strange tone, "That depends on what kind of Beyonder powers the pet has. For example, if it's a Spectator, then it can help you observe or listen in on certain occasions. As you know, most humans are wary of each other, but would never suspect that a pet would be eavesdropping on them, even if the pet was sitting right by their feet."

It makes sense! Father would avoid me when discussing important matters with the nobles, cabinet members, and other ministers. They would often lock the door to the room. But if Susie could hide long enough to be locked in with them, then she wouldn't be chased away… Also many ladies like to interact within private social circles… Audrey had a sparkle in her eyes as many thoughts welled in her mind.

Also, since Susie can speak now, she can tell me the content of the meetings directly… Susie is great! I have to treat you well. I have to teach you proper pronunciation and vocabulary…

Hmm, should I teach Susie the aristocratic pronunciation or a more normal Backlund accent? Would other dogs pick up on where Susie comes from when they interact? Wait, why am I considering this? Susie wouldn't use human language when interacting with other dogs…

Wait, Mr. Hanged Man, why did you use Spectator as an example?

C-could you have guessed what happened?

Audrey's expression changed. She regained her posture and smiled.

"Mr. Fool, I found another page of Emperor Roselle's diary."

I got this from Fors Wall.

"Great, you have repaid what you owed," Klein replied in a good mood.

"I am sorry, but there's not much content on this page of the diary." Audrey was conjuring the content she remembered onto the piece of goatskin.

Klein raised his hand and made the goatskin parchment appear in his palm before saying, "That doesn't affect my promise. Furthermore, the parts of the diary you handed me previously had two pages."

The pages collected by Justice and The Hanged Man were not originals. They were copied by researchers. Some would copy it on one page for recording purposes, while others kept the original look of the diary for convenience.

Klein looked down at the few lines of text on the page.

"December 20th. A new year approaches, but the feedback I received is making me very confused and troubled.

"There is no crude oil in this world! There's no crude oil to be found!"

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CHAPTER 114
THE STANDARDS OF A MEMBER

No crude oil? It couldn't be found for some reason, or there really wasn't any available?

From the period Emperor Roselle was assassinated till this day, about a hundred and fifty years have passed, and there are still no traces of crude oil…

Klein's pupils constricted as his hand quivered while holding the diary.

No crude oil not only meant that the future of the internal combustion engine became uncertain, it would also lead to a state of stagnation in the chemical industry. In other words, Earth's modern industrial age would never transpire here!

In short, the development of this world was uncertain to Klein.

Although he couldn't invent things, he had assumed that he was still at an advantage because he knew a bit of everything and could foresee the direction of technological development. When he saved enough money, he could make a risky investment on an industry that he thought showed promise. Furthermore, he wouldn't put all his eggs in one basket.

Klein thought that it was only a matter of time until he could own enormous wealth. By then, he would hire the so-called white gloves as representatives to establish international charity foundations. On the surface, they would provide relief to the poor. In reality, they would actually be establishing and

funding a revolt, in order to fight against the higher strata of society and enhance the living standards of the people in the lower class.

If he were to find a method of returning to Earth, he would segregate his property. A third to Benson, a third to Melissa, and a third for his foundation.

However, it was a pity that his perfect vision of the future was instantly half-shattered.

Luckily, there's still electricity and magnetism in this world. The telegram is a successful example, I should mainly invest in this in the future… Klein settled down and read down row by row.

"December 21st. I'm no longer thinking about crude oil anymore. Upgrading my Sequence level is what matters!

"December 22nd. The filthy environment in Richeux Borough is unacceptable. If I hadn't visited incognito, I might've never known that it still looks the same as when I was young. I want to gather all my ministers and formulate a 'Capital Sewer and Public Toilet Enhancement Plan'. Hmm, I have to rectify the people's bad habits. Let them boil hot water for consumption, wash their hands and faces frequently, don't litter, don't pee and poop anywhere, use condoms if possible… Haha, I thought of what to name this campaign: the Patriotic Health Campaign!

"Hence, the invention of the condom has to be brought forward. There's also masks, paper cups, and others. Yes, even the most primitive version would do. Give it a try. I have to thank this world for they still have rubber trees.

"December 23rd. Perhaps I should consider that suggestion. Keep a back door for myself outside of the Church of the God of Craftsmanship. For example, I could join that ancient and mysterious organization which influences the world from the shadows?"

Klein then suddenly realized that there was nothing else at the bottom. His emotions were indescribable.

Emperor Roselle, what was the name of the ancient and mysterious organization that was influencing the world from the shadows? Do I know it?

How could you stop here? Why didn't you write more?

It's just like when I used to read novels. When I read till the end and realized that the author ended up dropping the novel…

And Patriotic Health Campaign? The Emperor sure knows how to have fun…

The contents of the diary should've been written after he became the Consul of the Intis Republic. He might already have called himself the Emperor Caesar.

I have to read some books when I get back and flip through some historical texts of other countries. I have to see which year the 'Capital Sewer and Public Toilet Enhancement Plan' took place.

After his nearly twenty seconds of silence, Klein reined back his thoughts and let the diary in his hands vanish into thin air.

"You can start your discussion now."

Audrey let out a breath of relief and adjusted her state to become a Spectator. She smiled faintly and said, "I'd like to know if there are any Sequence potion named Arbiter, or a kind of Beyonder that can go through wooden doors or make locks ineffective?"

I know about this… Enveloped in the grayish-white fog, Klein was going to reply, but The Hanged Man answered first.

"I need you to help me investigate something in return for the answer."

"What is it?" Audrey asked with interest as well as with puzzlement.

Alger glanced towards The Fool and said, "I'd like to know if the King has the intention of taking revenge on the Feysac Empire and launching a new war on the East coast of Balam within this year or before June of next year."

The Tarot Club was currently using the Loen language, which was confirmed by the trio's accents at the first Gathering. Hence, Alger knew that Miss Justice was a noble in the Loen Kingdom while he also believed that Miss Justice knew that he was a Loen.

As for The Fool, Alger believed that His behavior as a Loen was merely a disguise, a disguise that would ease the discussion.

Ever since the ritualistic magic, Alger started using 'Him' to address The Fool politely.

Audrey recalled everything that she heard from various social events. She nodded confidently and said, "No problem, but I would need sufficient time to be certain."

"I can wait." Alger smiled and said, "With Mr. Fool as a witness, I believe you wouldn't go back on your promise."

Audrey looked towards the quiet yet mysterious Fool engulfed in gray fog as the corner of her mouth curved upwards.

"But I think the value of this information is worth more than both questions put together."

"When you confirm the answer, I'll provide compensation depending on the situation," Alger replied with an answer he prepared beforehand.

Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, do you need virtual currency to determine value? Klein smiled and leaned backwards while he looked at the two people before him.

Audrey relaxed and cheered for herself in her mind.

Well done! Audrey, you learned how to negotiate! She was so excited that she nearly broke out of her Spectator state. She quickly thought of something and asked, "Oh right, Mr. Hanged Man, did you receive the one thousand pounds?"

"I'm sorry, I'm still sailing. I have yet to return to land." Alger wasn't willing to bring it up. He answered her original question, "The Beyonder that can go through wooden doors and foil locks would probably be Sequence 9 Apprentice. The secret organization, Theosophy Order, has its formula. However, don't ignore the possibility that it was obtained through other channels, such as an ancient tomb of the Fourth Epoch."

The Theosophy Order, the secret organization that has countless ties with the Demoness Sect… Klein rubbed his chin with his finger leisurely.

Seeing that Mr. Fool didn't refute what was said, Audrey couldn't help but sigh.

"If I had found the formula for Apprentice before, I might not have opted for Spectator."

The performance was simply outstanding!

Alger didn't bother with Miss Justice's remark but continued his explanation, "There is also a Sequence potion that is entitled Arbiter. I think you should be familiar with it, because it is the Sequence pathway that the Augustus and Feynapotter Kingdom's Castiya family has. Of course, the low Sequence formulas were used as rewards in ancient times. Some nobles might have received it before."

The Augustus family was a royal family of the Loen Kingdom while the Castiya family was a royal family in the Feynapotter Kingdom.

It turns out that the Augustus family are all Arbiters… Audrey was enlightened and felt that it cleared up her suspicion.

She sighed and thought, *It's no wonder I've always gone along with their arrangements, always uncomfortable, always willing to admit defeat, like I'm never myself when I'm before them! I thought it was because I was timid…*

"The Arbiter has a convincing charm and considerable authority, as well as outstanding combat ability that can deal with the unexpected," Alger described the situation simply.

Audrey nodded slowly and leaned backwards. She then spoke elegantly, "I have no more questions."

Alger thought and looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I'd like to ask if the True Creator's Holy Residence that the Aurora Order advocates is the legendary Forsaken Land of the Gods?"

Forsaken Land of the Gods? I have only seen that term once in Roselle's diary… It might be in the secret dockets of the Nighthawks, but it isn't something I can know of currently… How do you want me to answer? Klein nearly twitched the corner of his lips.

He considered it for a while then he replied in a calm tone, "This is not something you should know now."

Alger felt his heart tighten, and he immediately lowered his head and replied, "Please forgive me for overstepping my boundaries."

Audrey wanted to ask about the Forsaken Land of the Gods but she also gave up the thought when she heard that.

In the lofty divine hall above the gray fog, silence suddenly filled the air.

At that moment, Audrey felt that she should say something.

"Mr. Fool, if—and I'm saying if—I have the opportunity to join another organization, such as the Psychology Alchemists, is it permitted?"

Klein maintained his posture of leaning backward as he said with a chuckle, "That is no problem. My requirement is that the existence of the Tarot Club is not to be exposed."

"If you become a member of another organization, the materials and information you can use for exchange will also increase."

After saying that, he suddenly recalled that he was also a member of another organization. He was a real Nighthawk while The Hanged Man was most likely related to the Church of the Lord of Storms.

Would my Tarot Club be the so-called Rebels Alliance? Traitor Gathering? Klein was drowned in deep thoughts.

"I understand now." Audrey was excited but she immediately thought of a question, "Mr. Fool, if I found a suitable gentleman or lady for this gathering, could I guide them to join? How do I do that?"

Alger thought and asked, "Mr. Fool, what is the requirement to be a member of this gathering? How do we determine?"

Ambitious, *ethical*, *cultured*, *disciplined…* Four words popped into Klein's head instantly.

He maintained his silence for a few seconds and only spoke when Justice and Hanged Man appeared a little uneasy.

"You can inform me here of people who you find suitable. I will decide if they will join us. Before that, you can't give any hint that would cause the secret of the Tarot Club's existence to be exposed. You must remember, to non-Gathering members…"

Klein paused and said in a heavy voice, "You must not speak my name without my permission."

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CHAPTER 115
CHEAT

"You must not speak my name without my permission."

…

Several minutes after the Gathering ended, Audrey and Alger, who had returned to their bedroom and ship respectively, could still hear the words of The Fool reverberating in their ears.

Their impression of the mysterious and powerful Mr. Fool was normally relaxed, calm, and unfathomable. It was rare that he would adopt such a stern, supercilious attitude.

Because of that, they were exceptionally alarmed. They submitted to his wishes sincerely.

They were no strangers to words like that, but these instructions were normally recorded within The Revelation of Evernight or The Book of Storms!

…

In the West Borough of Tingen City, on Daffodil Street.

Klein pulled open the curtains and allowed the golden sunlight to pour into his bedroom.

He had inspected the star that previously sent out a prayer after Justice and The Hanged Man left, but didn't obtain any information this time round.

Since the crimson star had the ability to store prayers, akin to sending offline messages, Klein believed that the youth who spoke Jotun hadn't prayed again from the last two times he entered the world above the giant.

This made him suspect that there was no hope left for the youth's parents, and that the young man had chosen to give up…

With his back facing the sunlight, Klein walked to the edge of his bed and laid down. He didn't want to move.

He knew that he shouldn't waste any time and head to the Divination Club and continue the process of digesting the potion, but he didn't want to move. He laid silently on his bed, enjoying his rare break.

He had a full schedule from Tuesday to Friday, mysticism lessons and practicals in the mornings, shooting and combat training in the afternoons. He was mentally exhausted by the time evening came around. There was no change in his morning routine on Saturday, but he had to guard Chanis Gate in the afternoon. He would've stayed underground until the dawn of Sunday.

Sunday morning was time for Klein to catch up on sleep. In the afternoon, circumstances would determine if he went to the Divination Club. On Monday morning, he had just returned from Khoy University in the morning and had the Tarot Gathering in the afternoon. He also had to think about the issue of acting as a Seer. In other words, he had been busy the entire week, with no time to rest.

Thus, all Klein wanted to do was laze around, lying on his bed like a loser, not doing anything except daydreaming.

No, how can a boss of a cult be so worthless. If Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man caught wind of this, their impression of me would shatter… Klein buried his face into his blanket and motivated himself.

"I have the formula for the Clown potion, all I need to do now is fully digest the Seer potion… I have the formula to the Clown potion, all I need

to do now is fully digest the Seer potion…"

He muttered to himself repeatedly and then propped himself up.

Klein took a bronze coin from his pocket and quickly divined if it was suitable for him to head to the club today and got an definitive response.

"Five, four, three, two, one!"

After the countdown, he forced himself to stand up straight and walked over to the clothes rack before picking out his suit and hat.

…

In the meeting room of the Divination Club on Howes Street.

Klein sat down in a shaded corner and sipped on his Sibe black tea as he read the Tingen City Honest Paper. There weren't many members around him, just six or seven.

Just as he was laughing at the grammatical mistake used in a job advertisement, he saw a monocled Glacis walk in with a silk top hat in his hand. There was a blue-dressed lady in her thirties beside him.

The lady had curved eyebrows and large yet dull eyes. In her left hand, she was carrying an Intis hat decorated with the feathers of a black swan.

That hat is ridiculous. Wouldn't her neck be sore wearing that? Klein noted to himself. He looked over and massaged his glabella, as if alleviating his fatigue.

Through his Spirit Vision, he noticed that Glacis and the lady were both healthy, but were anxious, angry, and flustered.

"Good afternoon, Glacis. That Mr. Lanevus wasn't a trustworthy fellow, was he?" Klein asked with a smile, remaining seated.

Glacis had asked him for a divination about investing in Lanevus's steel company. Glacis had obtained a negative suggestion.

But noticing his indecisiveness, Klein believed that he had taken the risk anyway. Klein hoped the man hadn't invested everything he had. Thus, Klein immediately made the association and judgment when he saw the colors of his emotions.

Glacis froze for a moment, then let out a bitter smile.

"I truly regret not listening to the suggestion you divined for me. Heh, this is the second time I'm saying something like that, let's hope, no—I believe that there will not be a third time."

He turned his head and looked at the lady with some wrinkles.

"Madam Christina, look, Mr. Moretti had already guessed our motive for coming here without us even speaking. He is the most magical fortune-teller I have ever seen. I'm more than willing to describe him as a seer."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. We have come here precisely because of Lanevus." Christina gave a simple bow, clearly anxious and flustered.

"Shall we head to Topaz?" Glacis was more collected. He pointed to the door of the meeting room with his chin.

Klein laughed as he got up.

"This is the job of a fortune-teller."

He followed the path to the empty Topaz room.

Glacis locked the wooden door and walked to his seat while sighing.

"Lanevus has gone missing. He gave the excuse of going to the Sivellaus County to oversee the excavation and left Tingen, never to return. We sent

someone to look for him via steam locomotive and discovered that the large-scale steel mine he spoke of only existed on the map. Luckily for me, I recalled your advice and only invested a third of what I initially intended to invest. Otherwise, I would have lost my family and my life."

Klein's pupils were darker than usual when he looked at the two people in front of him. He asked, a little curious, "Before making such a major financial decision, wouldn't you choose a representative and ascertain if whatever he said was true at the Hornacis mountain range in the Sivellaus County?"

Christina responded quickly, "Our representative was fooled, fooled by the people Lanevus employed, the place he rented, and the land that was fenced off."

Klein didn't question them any further. He maintained his attitude of a Seer and asked, "What do you wish to divine today?"

"We wish to see if this is salvageable or not," Christina said as she looked at Glacis.

Klein took a piece of paper and a fountain pen.

"Then let us do an astrolabe divination. I'll ask, and you'll answer."

Between the questions, Klein marked out the Thunderous constellation and the corresponding symbols of various situations before completing the astrolabe.

He used more elements in his astrolabe than an ordinary person would have. The method he was going to use to interpret the astrolabe was going to bring him closer to the truth.

"Madam, Sir, you are now at a crossroad. If you don't restrain yourselves and succumb to your greed and anxiety, you will fall further into the abyss, never being able to free yourselves. But if you can be patient and wait

persistently without being greedy, then there will be an opportunity of you seeing the sunlight…" Klein said, his tone unhurried.

"I understand." Christina nodded. She thought for a moment before saying, "Mr. Moretti, can you divine Lanevus's whereabouts?"

"No, I don't think so. The information Lanevus left behind is most likely fake; even his name might not be real. How can I divine anything? Unless you can give me very specific details, or an item he carries with him all the time," Klein replied truthfully.

Christina fell silent for a moment before pushing a one-soli note toward Klein.

"I have heard from Glacis that you are a true seer, who is respectful and fearful of fate and not greedy for money. You can think of the rest as tips that I am giving to the club."

"Thank you for your confidence in me."

She stood up and bade farewell before leaving quickly.

Not greedy for money… No, I am a materialistic man! Klein was regretting his actions of acting as a charlatan.

Seeing Christina leave, Glacis closed the door and asked, "Is there really no way?"

"I told you the way just now." Klein smiled as he leaned back.

Glacis sighed. "Lanevus took off with over 10,000 pounds and his victims totaled over a hundred people. Luckily for me, I only lost 50 pounds. Those were my savings, and I have no debt. But Miss Christina invested 150 pounds. To her, this is not a sum that she can bear easily."

"Have you called the police?" Klein suddenly felt anger towards the cheat after hearing the sum of 10,000 pounds.

One could be considered rich even in Backlund with money like that.

I don't know if the police would enlist the help of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind for a simple case like this… Klein thought, a little distracted.

Glacis nodded and said, "We've already made a police report. The police are paying a lot of attention to this case. After much discussion, we're willing to take out a portion of the money we would get back as a reward. One can get 10 pounds as a reward if they manage to provide clues about Lanevus's whereabouts. If you can give a precise location and help the police catch Lanevus, you can get a reward of 100 pounds!"

10 pounds for a clue? 100 pounds for catching Lanevus? Klein's eyes nearly sparkled after he heard that. His breathing became heavy.

He happened to be worrying about how he was going to pay the detective in the future.

He could barely afford the second phase of the payment with the extra salary of three pounds he received this week, but if the private investigator managed to complete his mission within the next week, then he wouldn't have enough to pay off whatever he promised to pay. He would be lacking a few soli, provided that he wouldn't need to spend his savings elsewhere this week.

Perhaps the police will have some items belonging to Lanevus. But they won't be very useful if he's already left Tingen… Klein felt a mixture of excitement and disappointment.

In the next hour and a half, Klein got another two customers due to Angelica's recommendation. One was a divination for a one-year-old

toddler. Klein immediately drew the corresponding birth astrolabe and explained it, much to the satisfaction of his customer.

The other was searching for an item. Klein used tarot reading, coupled with dream divination, to give him a general area. This made his customer very shocked, for he had never seen a fortune-teller that could give him such accurate information.

Perhaps I could obtain enough funds just by doing divinations for others . Klein, who had received some tips, put on his hat, held his cane, and walked toward the exit of the club.

At this moment, he saw Christina enter the club once again with a young girl wearing a sunhat beside her.

Christina saw Klein and immediately approached him. She asked softly, "Mr. Moretti, you said that you could try divining Lanevus's whereabouts if there was something belonging to him?"

"That is correct." Klein nodded.

Christina heaved a sigh of relief and asked in a serious tone, "Then is his child something that belongs to him?"

Huh? Klein was momentarily a little lost.

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CHAPTER 116
LANEVUS'S CHILD

Christina didn't notice the seer's blank look. She took a peek at Angelica over at the reception desk, lowered her voice, and said, "I mean Lanevus's child."

She extended her hand to point at the young lady with the sunhat and said, "This is my niece, Megose. Her mother is my elder sister. I'm very sorry and regretful that I thought Lanevus was an outstanding young man back then, and I introduced Megose to Lanevus, who was single. Then they became lovers.

"Megose's parents were happy with Lanevus at first too. They planned to pour all their savings into the steel company after they got engaged. Luckily, before that happened, Lanevus ran away. Their family didn't encounter any life-threatening losses. Unfortunately, my sister and brother-in-law have to explain to their relatives and friends why the engagement ceremony will be canceled, and they have to worry about the child that Megose is bearing.

"We believe in the God of Steam and Machinery; we are not believers of Lord of Storms. We don't believe in chastity before marriage. We don't blame Megose, and even pity her. However, the existence of the child does make things difficult, especially since he has such a father."

He took advantage of people both financially and sexually… Klein looked towards Megose who was standing quietly next to her. He then realized that the lady was quite a beauty.

She had a bright forehead, long blond hair, and a pair of big eyes just like Christina's. She looked depressed yet calm, and her lips were tightly pursed together.

What an infuriating swindler, and he even got away successfully… Klein cursed at Lanevus and said after some thought, "If it was a child that is already born, I do have a way to divine Lanevus's whereabouts using the child as an aid. But unfortunately, this would require us to wait a few months. Yes, this might be a reflection of the divination result earlier. Be patient and wait persistent without being greedy, then there will be an opportunity of seeing the sunlight."

"A few months…" Christina mumbled to herself as she shook her head. "No, after such a long period of time, even if we find Lanevus, we wouldn't be able to get back our money…"

She looked sideways at Megose. Her voice lowered unconsciously as she asked, "Do you have anything that Lanevus carried around before?"

"No," Megose answered clearly yet gently. "Would the ring he gave me count?"

"It must be something that he carried for a very long time." Klein shook his head.

Christina remained silent for a while and looked at Megose when she said, "You have to make a decision. I think keeping this child would make your future tough and thorny. Are you going to tell him that his father was a swindler and took away many people's money, including his mother's?

"Time to head to the clinic, to the hospital. Plus, this could help us to find Lanevus, to get what we lost."

Hey, isn't such divination a little hardcore? It was not Klein's place to involve himself in the family matters of others. So, he could only wait patiently by the side as he lampooned inwardly from time to time.

Megose lowered her head and looked down. She didn't speak for quite a while.

Then, she touched her stomach and revealed a gentle smile.

"He is different from his father. He will be a considerate and likable child.

"He will kick me lightly every day, telling me his mood. He will even hum a song, whistle and use music to help me sleep…"

Klein heard and suddenly felt something amiss.

The former part of what Megose said seemed to be normal, but the latter part was like the ravings of a madwoman.

Did she have a mental problem due to the incident? Klein raised his right hand to his glabella. He pretended to massage it to ease his weariness.

Just then, Megose suddenly turned around and walked towards the door, leaving only one sentence.

"Maybe his father will come back in secret after he is born, keeping a part of the money for his child…"

Klein never expected she would respond like that, and he was momentarily taken aback that he forgot to activate his Spirit Vision. Then, he watched helplessly as Megose left the club and walked down the stairs.

Christina let out a sigh and said, "Sorry, Mr. Moretti. Sorry to bother you, we will look for one of Lanevus's personal items that he carried with him all the time."

Klein nodded indiscernibly. He watched her walk downstairs and sighed as he shook his head.

…

The next morning, Klein entered Blackthorn Security Company, greeted Rozanne, and asked, "Where's today's newspaper?"

The sweet brown-haired girl Rozanne sized him up and said, puzzled, "Klein, you're so weird."

"Why?" Klein asked in reply, smiling.

Rozanne rolled her eyes and said, "You always read the newspapers during noon break because you have mysticism lessons in the morning. Old Neil is already waiting for you in the armory!"

"I found out earlier that there would be a case offering a reward, so I want to read the newspaper to memorize the criminal's appearance. Perhaps I might one day come across the person?" Klein explained with a smile.

"Is that so?" Rozanne picked up the day's newspapers and started flipping through them out of curiosity. "Wanted… Lanevus, right?"

Klein immediately answered, "Yes."

"… Wicked swindler! He stole about ten thousand pounds!" Rozanne read carefully for nearly twenty seconds before cursing suddenly in rage.

Klein shared the same feeling.

"It's really ridiculous! Even I want to apply to take over the case!"

Rozanne continued to read and shook her head regretfully.

"The case doesn't seem to involve supernatural factors. Even if it did, it would be passed to Mandated Punishers under the Lord of Storms."

Klein didn't quite understand what Rozanne meant, but after he took the newspaper and read it, he sighed.

"Yeah, there were so many people cheated. There must be believers from all three major churches, and Lanevus's steelwork company was said to be located in the South."

If a case was related to supernatural factors and involved only the believer of one God, it would be passed to the corresponding team. However, if it involved believers of the Evernight Goddess, Lord of Storms, and the God of Steam and Machinery, it would be assigned based on jurisdiction area. The Nighthawks controlled the Golden Indus Borough, the North Borough, and the West Borough. The Mandated Punishers controlled the East Borough, South Borough, and the port, while the Machinery Hivemind troop was responsible for the university and suburb areas.

As he flipped through the newspapers, Klein memorized Lanevus's appearance,

He had a plump forehead, black hair, brown eyes, and a pair of spectacles with almost round lenses. He smirked faintly, looking as though he was mocking everyone.

Besides that pair of spectacles, Lanevus didn't seem to have any obvious traits, and looked really ordinary.

He chatted with Rozanne casually then passed through the partition, in preparation to head underground.

Then, he saw the pale and cold Corpse Collector Frye and the white-haired black-eyed author Seeka Tron exiting the recreation room and turning towards him.

After a simple greeting, Klein watched his two teammates leave and discovered Dunn Smith in a black windbreaker standing by the side of the door he opened.

"There's a case?" Klein asked curiously.

At that time of day, there wouldn't be two Nighthawks heading out together for no reason.

Dunn looked over with his gray eyes. He nodded and smiled.

"There seems to be a paranormal incident in West Borough. I've sent Seeka and Frye to check on it, but you don't have to worry about that. Until you master combat techniques, I don't intend to send you on any missions. I have to take responsibility for my team members."

Captain, you are such a nice person. Besides the receding hairline and bad memory, you are flawless… Klein complimented inwardly. He asked for confirmation, "In other words, I only need to attend mysticism classes and combat training. I don't have to contribute anything, and I can still get my pay?"

"This is only temporary," Dunn confirmed.

I only need to 'attend classes' and 'work out', and I'll get an ample paycheck. It's great just thinking about it… Klein thought happily.

I hope there are no more coincidences! He prayed in silence.

…

The days passed by peacefully until Friday. Klein completed his combat training and took a carriage back to Besik Street.

Outside Henry's Private Detective Company, he looked to the left and to the right. Confirmed that no one was watching him, he put on the gauze mask, lifted up the collar of his windbreaker, and quickly entered the stairway.

Knocking on the door, Klein saw the middle-aged brawny man, Detective Henry, again.

"Good afternoon, sir. One of the cases that you entrusted us with is done." The deep blue-eyed Detective Henry spoke with a hoarse voice from drinking and smoking.

Klein intentionally lowered his voice and said, "Is it the information of the man that appeared at the Evil Dragon Bar?"

The man that bought the Spectator potion's supplementary ingredients…

"Yes." Henry waved his smoking pipe.

Then, he didn't say anything but look at Klein with a smile.

Klein understood what the man meant, and he took out four one-pound notes and handed it over.

"This is the second payment."

He paused and added, "Write me a receipt."

His private stash of money had been reduced to less than one pound…

"No problem." Henry coughed. He checked the anti-counterfeiting marks on the notes as he instructed his staff to bring over pen and paper.

Then, he beckoned to Klein for him to have a seat while he quickly wrote a receipt and stamped a seal on the bottom.

After completing everything, Henry took a puff at his pipe and said, "According to your description, my assistant and I waited at the Evil Dragon Bar for three days before finally meeting that man.

"He's quite an alert gentleman, and is good at observation. Thankfully, we're experienced…

"His name is Daxter Guderian, a doctor of the Greenhill Mental Asylum."

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CHAPTER 117
CONTACT

Daxter Guderian, a doctor of the Greenhill Mental Asylum…

Klein silently repeated what the detective had said and started to think about the ways he could interact with this doctor whom he suspected to be a Spectator from the Psychology Alchemists.

He didn't want to take too much of a risk on this matter. He didn't want the Nighthawks to discover that he was problematic. He didn't want to lose the life he had now over a mere exchange of information and resources.

Furthermore, this person was most probably a Spectator. Anyone who hadn't undergone special training wouldn't be able to hide their motives and thoughts from a person like that.

I'll get a proxy, making me appear a little more mysterious? No, the more people involved, the easier it is for there to be problems… Yes… perhaps I can hide the truth within the truth. I'll let that doctor know of my thoughts and feelings through my expression and body language, but not the whole truth…

As Detective Henry described Daxter Guderian, Klein thought about what methods he could use to minimize risk without affecting the results he wanted.

Slowly, he found inspiration in a detective film he had once seen.

Well, I can try that, but I'll have to practice it repeatedly… Klein nodded inwardly before directing his full concentration on what Detective Henry

had to say.

Cough… Henry cleared his throat and said, "We are still working on the request involving the red chimney. You should know that there are many buildings in Tingen that have similar characteristics. Of course, it would be much easier if you could provide us with more clues."

Klein laughed dryly.

"I wouldn't have had to make the request if I had more clues."

Honestly, this long investigation had depressed him, for the person behind the scenes had obviously noticed Klein's divinations and had more than enough time to find another hideout.

Thus, all he could do was hope that he could find relevant clues from the information of the tenants.

And that alone cost seven pounds… Just the thought of it made him feel the pinch… Klein grabbed his cane and left after Detective Henry finished his report.

…

At twenty minutes to nine on a Saturday morning, in an office of the Greenhill Mental Asylum.

Daxter Guderian, who was wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, removed his jacket and hat and hung them on the clothes rack.

He had just picked up his tin of coffee powder when he heard knocking on the door.

"Please come in," Daxter said casually.

The half-closed door opened, and a young man wearing a black windbreaker entered.

Daxter didn't recognize the person that walked in, so he asked, puzzled, "Good morning, you are?"

Klein closed the door, took off his hat, and pressed it against his chest before bowing.

"Good morning, Doctor Daxter, please forgive me for taking the liberty to visit without any warning. I am Probationary Inspector Klein Moretti of the Awwa Police Department. These are my identification documents and badge."

"Inspector?" Daxter muttered softly as he received Klein's identification documents and badge.

"Special Operations Department…" He looked up slowly, his eyes calm, as if he was scrutinizing something.

Short black hair, pupils slightly darker than brown, a scholarly aura, no ill intent at the moment…

Daxter returned the items and pointed to the chair on the other side of the table.

"Please have a seat, Officer. How might I assist you?"

Klein sat down and placed his cane to the side. He slowly put away his documents and badge, then smiled.

"Please allow me to reintroduce myself.

"I am also a member of Tingen City's Nighthawks Squad, specializing in dealing with incidents involving the supernatural.

"Good morning, Mr. Spectator."

Before he finished his sentence, he wasn't surprised to see Daxter's pupils constrict. Daxter retracted his hand, looking like he was about to escape.

"Officer, I don't understand what you mean." Daxter forced out a few words, almost unable to maintain his form. "I don't like jokes like this. Perhaps I should call security."

Klein slowly took out his revolver from his armpit holster, his smile unchanging.

"Mr. Daxter, I know that you can see my confidence and that I do not have any ill intent. Heh heh, honestly speaking, I wasn't too sure myself, but your reaction gave me the answer I needed."

Every sentence I said just now is true… Klein added in his heart.

Daxter relaxed slightly, his gaze shooting toward the revolver. He asked, confused, "I find it hard to understand why you came looking for me… I don't think that I revealed anything…"

Klein laughed and replied, "It was just a coincidence, or perhaps fate wanted us to meet.

"We ran into each other once in the underground market at Evil Dragon Bar, but you didn't notice me back then.

"You were smart to purchase the supplementary ingredients for the potion first, but since I am familiar with that formula, you caught my attention."

Daxter suddenly exhaled, as if he just lost the motivation to defend himself.

"I see…

"I thought I was careful enough, to think that, to think that…"

After muttering to himself, he looked into Klein's eyes and said, "Officer, I know that you're not here to arrest me. What is your true motive for being here?"

With a relaxed expression, Klein said, "I am different from the other Nighthawks. I don't believe that Beyonders not within our ranks are criminals in the making. This is not fair to those who adhere to the law."

Daxter changed his posture. He loosened up and said, "The world would be at peace if the other Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind acted like you."

"You know of other members from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind?" Klein feigned surprise. "This is not something a person who became a Beyonder by mistake should know. There must be an organization behind you."

He leaned back and said with a smile, "Psychology Alchemists?"

He casually watched Daxter's expression contort as he said those words.

"I could see that you were anticipating my answer, yet I still missed the bait and fell into your linguistic trap…" Daxter said in frustration.

He started to notice that the Spectator state wasn't omnipotent. He could tell why the other party was here, but it didn't mean he understood the specifics.

Klein stroked the cylinder of his revolver and said, "Doctor, we need to have an honest conversation. That can start with me.

"I don't believe that Beyonders not under management are potential criminals, but I agree that every Beyonder must be registered and monitored. This is a precaution against the risk of Beyonders losing control. It's to avoid the occurrence of something even more dangerous.

"I won't disrupt your normal life, but I hope that there can be limited cooperation between us."

"Limited cooperation?" Daxter asked, as if thinking about something.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"Yes, limited.

"For example, tell me about your condition regularly. You should know that it is possible to save someone who has not completely lost control yet, and the Nighthawks have considerable experience in this regard.

"Or, if you could give me clues of a Beyonder you know, or a Beyonder in your organization who is about to do something that can endanger the innocent.

"Or, if you would like to exchange something for items that you could make more use of. This is a perk I am giving you. You should know what perks mean.

"Also, you need not worry about being suddenly prosecuted by members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind one day. You can live your life in joy and stability.

"We will give you something you can use to prove your identity. You can use it when you have no other options left."

Daxter listened on silently. It was a while before he said, "You want me to betray my organization?"

"No, not betray," Klein said sincerely. "This is the protection of justice, morals, and kindness. You are stopping something evil, merciless, and bloody. Other than that, I wouldn't ask you to betray the secrets of the organization you are in."

Daxter thought for a moment, as if feeling better now that there was an excuse.

He was silent for a few seconds before he extended his right hand.

"Here's to a successful cooperation."

Klein shook his hand with his free hand and said, "A successful cooperation."

He paused for a moment before chuckling.

"Doctor, can you now tell me if you are a member of the Psychology Alchemists?"

"Yes." Daxter nodded.

Klein, who hadn't deactivated his Spirit Vision since he entered, didn't see any changes in the colors of his emotions. Thus he asked discreetly, "How did you join the Psychology Alchemists?"

Daxter looked into his eyes and said, "I discovered that there was a patient of this asylum who could see right through me when I was tending to him. His clear mind was nothing like a lunatic…

"His name is Hood Eugen."

Klein committed the name to memory and chatted with Daxter a little longer, deciding on a secret way to communicate and meet up.

He didn't exchange matters regarding potions, formulas, and rumors for the time being. At an appropriate moment, he bade farewell and put away his revolver before leaving Daxter's office.

Daxter exhaled after he saw Klein's back disappear from his field of vision. He slumped into his chair, feeling a little agonized and little relaxed.

…

36 Zouteland Street. Inside Blackthorn Security Company.

Seated behind his desk, Dunn swept the area with his gray eyes and asked, "What happened?"

Klein, who was late by about half an hour, organized his thoughts and said, "Captain, I found a Beyonder and confirmed that he is a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

"He's an orthodox doctor and is willing to cooperate with us. I think it's best to maintain the status quo. He could help us learn more about the current condition of the Association of Psychological Alchemy."

After pausing for a few seconds, Klein added, "I want to develop him into an informant for the Nighthawks, or a hidden external member."

The word 'informant' came from the Intis language. It was created by Emperor Roselle.

Dunn nodded slowly and said, "You handled the situation well, but it would be best to inform me when you face such a situation in the future.

"Give me that doctor's information and a written account of the way you handled the situation. I will give him something he can use to prove his identity.

"Also, don't speak of this to Leonard and the rest. Even though they are trustworthy teammates, the protocol clearly requires us to keep this close.

"You will be in charge of contacting that doctor in the future."

Klein exhaled silently and replied with a smile, "Alright."

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CHAPTER 118
AUGUST

Time flew by and Tingen bade farewell to the end of summer. The temperature hovered between twenty-six and twenty-seven degrees Celsius.

Whoosh!

Klein stood up from the bathtub and took a stride forward, sending water droplets to the floor.

He stood there naked, looking down at his abs. He flexed and saw prominent muscle lines appear.

That was the result of his daily training. Besides, he appeared a lot more energetic.

And just today, his combat teacher, Gawain had started teaching him the basic footwork for punching and the techniques for delivering force.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein stepped on the floor barefooted in the bathroom, either sliding forward or retreating before dodging to the right and swinging his fist while he made a defensive gesture.

Phew. He stopped and let out a breath happily. He took the towel next to him and wiped himself down.

After getting in touch with Daxter Guderian, the doctor in the mental asylum, Klein seemed to escape from coincidences for two whole weeks. Without the constant barrage of supernatural incidents, his life became stable. He received his paycheck on time, researched mysticism in-depth,

trained his marksmanship and fighting skills, developed new cooking recipes, slowly gathered decent utensils and decorations with Benson and Melissa, asked his teammates about supernatural cases in the past, divined for people who came to the club, and strictly followed the principles he figured out.

That made him more stable. If it wasn't for the late nights in which he still missed Earth, the red chimney that had yet to be uncovered, or the Misfortune Cloth Puppet's picture that still appeared in his dreams occasionally, he would've started getting used to his current life and think of it affectionately.

During that time, three Tarot Club Gatherings were convened, but Klein didn't receive any new pages of Roselle's diary. However, according to Justice's explanation, she had gotten to know two Beyonders and she was getting in touch with them consistently. When she got into their circle of acquaintances, it was likely that she could trade for more pages of Roselle's diary.

The Hanged Man also expressed that he had returned to land and was dealing with some matters. He would begin looking for more as soon as he had more free time.

Besides, Justice felt that the two Beyonders whom she knew were potential targets to join the Gathering. They both had decent identities as cover, with certain but different channels of information, as well as principles and unique characteristics. They were not the kind of people that would sell out a secret. The only problem was that they were only Sequence 9 Beyonders, which wasn't too suitable for a high-end secret organization like the Tarot Club.

High-end secret organization? Sounds more like a pyramid scheme… Klein only let out a heavy sigh to cover up the fact that he was at a loss for words to reply to Miss Justice's complacency. He could only agree to observe the two Beyonders further.

Of course, Justice wasn't the innocent and romantic maiden from before. She kept her guard up and never mentioned the names and traits of the two Beyonders. She was afraid that The Hanged Man would be able to identify her through that.

Miss Justice said that she clearly feels the signs of the potion digesting. She might need another three to four weeks until she completes her acting as a Spectator. My scheduled acquisition of the Telepathist formula has to be brought forward… Klein threw aside the towel that he used to dry himself and put on his clothes as he thought about the Tarot Club from the day before.

In the last twenty days, he had only met Daxter Guderian once. He had the idea of haste makes waste, so he merely chatted about the doctor's state and asked unimportant matters about the Psychology Alchemists.

Given the speed with which Justice was digesting the potion, he had no choice but to begin thinking about how to get the formula of Sequence 8 Telepathist from Daxter earlier.

Klein buttoned his shirt and took another dry towel to wrap around his head to absorb the water in his hair.

Compared to Justice, he was digesting the Seer potion even faster than expected. By this week, the sounds that he shouldn't hear and things that he shouldn't see had already vanished while engaging in Cogitation or Spirit Vision.

Flipping over the towel, Klein dried his hair again. He lifted his head to look at the door and muttered to himself, "The Seer principles that I've figured out are really efficient. Next week… I should be able to digest the potion entirely by next week. I have no idea where to get the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose required by the Clown formula… Maybe I could do as Lady Daly did and send in a special application? But that would definitely attract the attention of the higher-ups, and I want to develop at my own pace. The

believer from the Aurora Order in the police department was found too, but I have yet to find out who this Mr. Z is…

"Henry said that he would complete the red chimney task before the end of this week. My private stash of money has returned to slightly more than seven pounds, so at least I don't have to worry about making the final payment…

"Some of the information on houses and tenants that he provided before didn't seem to have any abnormalities, but I have no time to investigate them one by one…

"Perhaps I could see which red chimney houses have gotten new tenants recently?

"Hmm, that's one way to look at it."

…

Sitting silently for another half a minute, he put on his black trousers, bow tie, and armpit holster. He then picked up his sweaty knight training suit from the floor and tossed it into the laundry basket. He opened the door and exited the bathroom. He had just finished his Wednesday afternoon combat training, and he was still at his teacher Gawain's place.

"Hello, Mr. Moretti." Gawain's maidservant happened to pass by, and she quickly bowed.

Klein nodded slightly and pointed at the messy bathroom.

"Could you clean this up, please?"

"Of course, sir. The clothes will be taken care of by the laundry maid. She'll come over at six." The maidservant held her head low when she answered.

Laundry maids had no accommodation or food included, so they weren't hired by only one household. They were normally contracted to handle the laundry from several households. Either they rushed around daily, washing one household's clothes before going to the next, or they would gather all the clothes from different households and take care of it all at the same time, before sending it all back. Only then could they barely make a living.

Klein didn't say much but returned to the living room to bid farewell to the owner who was sitting on the rocking chair.

He saw Gawain nodding lethargically, a light brown blanket covering his legs and the Awwa Evening News in his hands.

Klein knew for a fact that the gentleman bathing in the setting sun's glow was in his early fifties, but his listlessness made him seem like he was already in his eighties.

During combat training, Gawain maintained silence and only give pointers when he needed to. He wasn't one for casual chatting. Klein was so exhausted from the daily training that he had no intention of trying to engage in conversation. Thus, their relationship remained distant.

From his demonstrations, Teacher Gawain's strength is still quite terrifying, and his steps are swift too. I reckon it wouldn't be a problem for him to fight three of me… He has the pay from the police station, and he also bought a plot of land in a village out in the Tingen suburbs that provides a fixed rental… He hires a chef, a maidservant, and a laundry maiden… In the Foodaholic Empire on Earth, a man in his fifties with such wealth would have been traveling the world…

Klein looked away from Gawain and shook his head. Then, he went to the clothes rack to take down his top hat and black windbreaker.

After he tidied himself up, he took his cane and exited the house. He walked along the weed-covered stone path towards the gates.

Just then, he saw that there was a two-wheeled carriage stopped outside the metal fence, and there was a man with a familiar face standing next to it.

"Leonard?" Klein muttered, looking suspiciously towards his messy-haired Nighthawks teammate.

Leonard was dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and buttonless leather boots as he twirled his hat in his hands. When he saw Klein come out from the house, he smiled and asked, "Are you pleasantly surprised?"

Only surprise, without any joy… Klein ignored Leonard's inappropriate behavior and looked into the fake poet's green eyes.

"What happened?"

Leonard put on his hat and said, "Captain wants you to work with me and Frye. Let's talk about it on the way."

"Alright." Klein followed him into the carriage.

As the scene outside of the carriage flew past, Leonard took up the document bag by his side and threw it at Klein.

Klein caught it steadily and took out a document. He then started reading carefully.

"August 11th, 11pm, at a workhouse in West Borough, the bankrupt Salus attempted arson to cause a tragedy. But in the end, he only managed to burn himself to death…"

"August 11th, 10pm, harbor worker, Zid jumped into the Tussock River and ended his poverty-stricken life…"

"August 11th, 8pm, in Iron Cross Street's Lower Street, Mrs. Lauwis who earned a living by selling matchboxes died of a sudden disease…"

…

Klein was puzzled when he read the first two incidents. He found the deaths very ordinary and common. Not only should it have been beneath the attention of the Nighthawks, even the police force would avoid wasting resources looking into such obvious causes of death.

However, when he read down the list, he slowly creased his eyebrows.

After two pages, he suddenly lifted his head and looked at Leonard.

"Isn't this too many?"

When the number of ordinary deaths reached a staggering amount, it was difficult to call it normal.

For once, Leonard nodded seriously and said, "The number of death incidents within the past two weeks are five times the normal rate.

"When the Tingen Police headquarters tabulated the data, they realized the problem and quickly passed it over to us, as well as the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind.

"Although these death incidents appeared normal during initial investigations, Captain believes we should investigate them once more. It might require the help of divination or ritualistic magic."

Klein said with a look of enlightenment, "I understand."

Leonard snapped his fingers and said, "You, me, and Frye are in a team. He's waiting for us at Iron Cross Street's Lower Street. Seeka, Royale, and Old Neil are in another team, investigating corresponding incidents in the North Borough. Captain is staying in the security company to respond to any emergencies."

"Okay." Klein nodded solemnly and suddenly thought of something. He quickly asked, "Can I drop by my place and leave a note?"

He had to tell his brother and sister that he couldn't dine at home that night because something has cropped up.

Leonard laughed.

"No problem, it's on the way."

With that, Klein calmed down and read over the death incidents again, intending to find a link among the various names, times, and causes of death.

Then, he suddenly realized something.

Is this my first group mission after becoming a Nighthawk?

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CHAPTER 119
THE TRUE LOWER STREET

Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Klein, who had left a note, locked the door and walked briskly towards Leonard Mitchell who was waiting by the side of the road.

Leonard's short black hair had grown a little over the month, and the lack of any grooming made it look messy.

Despite that, his messy hair still complimented his decent looks, emerald-colored eyes, and poetic vibes. It exuded a different sense of beauty.

Indeed, any hairstyle depends on the face… Klein lampooned inwardly. He pointed in the direction of Iron Cross Street and asked, "Is Frye waiting for us there?"

"Yes." Leonard smoothed his untucked shirt and said casually, "Did you notice any clues when you were looking at the documents?"

Klein held his cane in his left hand as he walked along the side of the road and said, "No, I cannot find anything common in their times, locations, or causes of death. You should know that any rituals involving evil gods or devils must be conducted within a certain time frame or using a special method."

Leonard touched the custom-made revolver hidden underneath his shirt, by his waist and chuckled.

"That isn't an absolute rule. In my experience, some evil gods or devils are easily satisfied, as long as they have a particular interest in what is being asked of them.

"Also, a good number of the deaths seem normal. We have to omit them before we can arrive at the real answer."

Klein glanced at him and said, "That's why the Captain asked us to investigate once more. To eliminate the normal incidents."

"Leonard, your tone and description tell me that you have considerable experience in this area, but you have only been a member of the Nighthawks for four years, with an average of two supernatural incidents a month. Furthermore, a large number of those were simple and easy to solve."

He always felt that Leonard Mitchell was a little weird and mysterious. Not only was he always suspicious of him, believing that there was something about him. In addition, his demeanor also changed from time to time, sometimes quiet, sometimes arrogant, sometimes flippant, sometimes staid.

"Could it be that you've also had a fortuitous encounter? An encounter that makes you view yourself as a star in a play?" Klein made a rough deduction based on all the movies, novels, and dramas he had watched in the past.

Upon hearing this question, Leonard laughed and said, "That's because you're not a full-fledged Nighthawk yet. You're still in the training phase.

"The Holy Cathedral compiles a record of all supernatural encounters experienced by cathedrals of the different dioceses and hands it down to its members once every six months.

"Aside from your mysticism lessons, you can submit an application to the Captain and request to enter Chanis Gate to read these records."

Klein nodded in enlightenment.

"The Captain has never mentioned this to me."

Klein hadn't had the opportunity to enter Chanis Gate up to this point.

Leonard chuckled and said, "I thought that you were already used to the Captain's style. To think that you are still naively waiting for him to remind you…"

Upon saying that, he added meaningfully, "We must be cautious of the Captain if there ever comes a day when he remembers everything."

Would that mean a loss of control? Klein nodded, his expression serious. He then asked, "Is the forgetfulness unique to the Captain? I had thought that it was a problem brought about by the Sleepless Sequence."

Burning the midnight oil usually leads to memory loss…

"More accurately, it's a symptom unique to a Nightmare. With dreams and reality intertwined, it's often hard for a person to differentiate between what is real and what isn't. They need to remember what isn't part of reality…" Leonard wanted to elaborate further, but they had already arrived at Iron Cross Street and found Corpse Collector Frye waiting for them at the public carriage station.

Frye was wearing a round black hat and a windbreaker of a similar color with a leather briefcase in his hand. He was so pale that it made Klein suspect if he would soon collapse at anytime. His icy aura made everyone else waiting for the carriage keep their distance from him.

After nodding to each other, the three grouped up silently and walked past the Smyrin Bakery before turning onto the Lower Street of Iron Cross Street.

They were immediately faced with a din. Merchants selling clam soup, seared fish, ginger beer, and fruits were shouting hysterically for attention, causing the pedestrians to involuntarily slow down.

It was already a little past five. People were returning to Iron Cross Street, and the sides of the streets were becoming crowded. Some children were mixed in the crowd, coldly watching everything, placing their attention on the pockets of the pedestrians.

Klein frequently came here for cheap cooked food and was familiar with the streets, especially since he had lived in a nearby apartment in the past. He reminded the group, "Be careful of thieves."

Leonard smiled. "You need not mind them."

He pulled on his shirt and adjusted the holster of his gun, revealing his revolver.

Suddenly, all the gazes fixed on them shifted away. The pedestrians around them instinctively made way.

Klein froze for a moment, then caught up to Leonard and Frye with large steps. He lowered his head, trying hard to avoid being noticed by anyone he knew.

Benson and Melissa still had dealings with the neighbors here. After all, they hadn't moved too far away.

The three made their way past the area that was had many peddlers and turned into the true Lower Street of Iron Cross Street.

The pedestrians here were all dressed in old, ragged clothes. They were cautious of strangers wearing bright and beautiful clothes; yet, there was also greed in their eyes, like vultures eyeing a meal, waiting to strike at any time. But Leonard's revolver prevented any accidents from happening.

"Let's first investigate the death from yesterday. We'll begin with Mrs. Lauwis, a lady who glued matchboxes together for a living." Leonard flipped his notes and pointed to a place not far away, "First floor, No. 134…"

As the three of them walked forward, children who were playing in the streets and dressed in shabby clothes quickly hid by the corner of the road. They observed them with eyes full of curiosity and fear.

"Look at their arms and legs, thin as matchsticks." Leonard sighed. He entered building No. 134 first.

Air that was a mixture of numerous scents entered Klein's nostrils. He could faintly detect the stench of urine, sweat, and mold, as well as the smell of burning coal.

Klein couldn't help but pinch his nose. He then saw Bitsch Mountbatten who had been waiting there for them.

Officer Mountbatten had a brownish-yellow mustache and was envious of Leonard's rank of inspector.

"Sir, I have already asked Lauwis to wait in his room," Bitsch Mountbatten said with his unique, shrill voice.

He clearly didn't recognize Klein, who now looked more energized and proper. All he cared about was sucking up to the three officers in front of him as he led them to the Lauwis family on the first floor.

It was a simple apartment. There was a bunk bed laid upright inside the room and a desk filled with glue and hard paper on the right side. The corner of the room was piled full of frames for matchboxes, while an old cabinet sat on the left, acting as a storage space for both clothes and cutlery.

A stove, toilet, and a small amount of coal and timber occupied the two sides of the door, while the center of the room was occupied by two dirty mattresses. A man was sleeping under a torn blanket, leaving no space for anyone to walk.

A lady lay on the lower level of the bunk bed, her skin ice cold. It was clear that she had lost all signs of life.

Beside the corpse sat a man in his thirties. He had oily hair, looked dispirited, and his eyes had lost their luster.

"Lauwis, these three officers are here to examine the body and ask you questions," Bitsch Mountbatten shouted, without any regard for the sleeping man.

The dispirited man looked up weakly and asked in surprise, "Didn't someone already examine the corpse and question me?"

He was dressed in a grayish-blue worker's uniform which had visible signs of being mended multiple times.

"Answer when I tell you to! Why do you have so many questions?" Bitsch Mountbatten berated the man, then turned to Leonard, Klein, and Frye. "Officers, this is Lauwis. The person on the bed is his wife, who is also the deceased. According to our preliminary analysis, she died from a sudden illness."

Klein and the rest tiptoed to the edge of the bed.

The high-nosed, thin-lipped Frye did not say anything with his cold demeanor. Instead, he patted Lauwis gently, signaling for the man to make way so that he could examine the body.

Klein looked at the sleeping man and asked, "This is?"

"M-my tenant." Lauwis rubbed his forehead as he said, "The rent for this room is three soli ten pence a week. I'm only a worker at the harbor, and my wife made two and a quarter pence per crate of glued matchboxes. Each crate h-has, up to 130 boxes. We, we also have a child. We can only rent the rest of the space to someone else. We only charge a soli a week for the mattress…"

"I have a tenant who's helping out at the theater, and he's not back before 10 at night. He sold his rights to the mattress in the daytime to t-this man. He's

the person who watches over the gate of the theater at night, so he only pays six pence every week…"

Hearing the other party stammer as he explained, Klein couldn't help but look at the crate in the corner of the room.

One crate had 130 matchboxes and only earned them 2.25 pence, about the cost of two pounds of black bread… How many crates could she manage a day [1] *?*

Leonard surveyed the surroundings and asked, "Was your wife acting abnormally prior to her death?"

Lauwis, who had been asked similar questions, pointed to the left side of his left chest and said, "From last week, well—perhaps the week before, she said that she felt stuffy in this area and couldn't catch her breath."

The precursor to a heart condition? A normal death? Klein interrupted, "Did you see how she died?"

Lauwis recalled, "She stopped working after sunset. Candles and gas are more expensive than matchboxes… She said that she was very tired and asked me to talk to the kids and let her rest. When I saw her again, she had a-already stopped breathing."

Lauwis could no longer hide his grief and pain when he said that.

Klein and Leonard asked several questions, but could not find anything unnatural about the death.

After they looked at each other, Leonard said, "Mr. Lauwis, please wait outside for a few minutes. We are going to conduct a thorough examination of the corpse. I don't think that you'll want to see that."

"Alright." Lauwis stood up anxiously.

Bitsch Mountbatten walked toward the mattress and kicked the tenant, violently chasing him out of the apartment. He then closed the door and guarded the room from the outside.

"So?" Leonard looked at Frye.

"She died of a heart attack," Frye said with certainty, retracting his hands.

Klein thought for a moment before taking out a half-penny, intending to do a quick judgment.

"Mrs. Lauwis's heart attack was due to supernatural causes?" No, that is too narrow, the answer might be misleading… Hmm, "There are supernatural factors influencing Mrs Lauwis's death." I'll use that! He quickly decided on a statement.

As he recited the statement, Klein made his way to the side of Mrs Lauwis's corpse. His eyes turned darker as he tossed the coin.

The sound of the coin reverberated around the room as it fell, straight into Klein's palm.

This time, the portrait of the king was facing up.

This meant that there were supernatural factors influencing Mrs. Lauwis's death!

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CHAPTER 120
WORKHOUSE

"There is the presence of supernatural factors…" Klein's eyes returned to normal, and he looked at Leonard and Frye.

Leonard suddenly chuckled.

"Very professional, and deserving of the title of Seer."

Are you trying to hint at something… Klein muttered in his head.

Frye opened his suitcase and took out a silver knife and other tools. He paused and asked, "The corpse tells me that she really died of a sudden heart attack. Do you have any way to divine a more detailed answer?"

Klein nodded seriously and said, "I can attempt to combine a mediumship ritual and a dream divination. Hopefully, I'll be able to obtain something from Mrs. Lauwis's remaining spirituality."

Frye maintained his cold and reserved state. He took two steps back and said, "Give it a try."

He turned his head sideways and looked at Klein. He suddenly sighed without much fluctuation in his tone. "You're getting more and more used to this kind of situation."

It's not like I wanted it… Klein had an urge to cry. He then took out the bottles of extracts, essential oils, and herbal powder. Then, he quickly set up the mediumship ritual.

He chanted the honored titles of the Evernight Goddess in the middle of the spirituality wall and recited his prayers in Hermes.

Soon, wind spun around him and the light grew dimmer.

Klein's eyes turned entirely black, and he repeated the divination statement, "The cause of Mrs. Lauwis's death.

"The cause of Mrs. Lauwis's death."

…

He entered the dreamland whilst standing and 'saw' a translucent spirit lingering around the corpse.

Then, he extended his illusory right hand to touch Mrs. Lauwis's remaining spirituality.

In an instance, light burst out in front of him as scenes flashed past, one after another.

There was a skinny and sallow lady dressed in ragged clothes, busily making matchboxes.

She suddenly paused and held her chest.

She was speaking to her two children.

Her body wavered as she gasped for air.

She was buying black bread when someone suddenly patted her.

She was having the symptoms of a heart attack again and again.

She was feeling weary and got into bed, but she never woke up ever again.

Klein observed every single detail, intending to look for a trace of the supernatural factor. But when everything ended, he still hadn't gained any clues. As the blurriness shattered, Klein left the dreamland and returned to reality.

He dispelled the wall of spirituality and said to the waiting Frye and amused Leonard,

"There were no direct symptoms. Most of the scenes revealed that Mrs. Lauwis had a heart ailment a long time ago. The only scene that was different was when Mrs. Lauwis was patted on the back by someone. The hand was fair and slender, apparently a woman's."

"For such a family, they wouldn't go to a doctor unless they're very, very sick. Even if they were to queue at a free charity hospital, time is not something they can afford to lose. A day without work might mean no food on the table the next day." Leonard sighed emotionally like a poet.

Frye looked at the corpse on the bed and sighed lightly.

Before Klein spoke, Leonard quickly got out of his pensive state and said thoughtfully, "Are you implying that the supernatural factor came into play when Mrs. Lauwis was patted? It came from the slender hand of a lady or madam?"

Klein nodded and replied, "Yes, but this is merely my interpretation. Divination is always unclear."

The conversation ended. He and Leonard stepped back to the other side of the bed and allowed Frye to take out his tools from his suitcase without any disturbance, so he could do a further examination.

After Frye was done, they waited as he packed up his tools. After cleaning up and covering the corpse, he turned around and said, "Her death was caused by a natural heart disease. There's no doubt about it."

Upon hearing the conclusion, Leonard paced back and forth. He even walked to the side of the door, paused for quite a while before saying, "That's it for now. Let's head over to the workhouse in West Borough. We'll see if we can find other clues. Maybe we can link the two incidents together."

"Okay, we can only hope," Klein agreed, still filled with puzzlement.

Frye picked up his suitcase and while skipping and walking, he carefully went across the two floor mattresses without stepping on anyone's blanket.

Leonard opened the door and walked out of the room first. He told Lauwis and the tenant, "You can return home now."

Klein thought for a moment before adding, "Don't be in a hurry to bury the body. Wait for another day, as there might be one more thorough examination."

"A-alright, Officer." Lauwis bowed lightly and replied in a hurry. Then, feeling numbed and lost, he said, "A-actually, I… I don't have the money to bury her just yet. I have to save for another few days, just a few more days. Luckily, the weather is turning cold."

Klein was shocked and asked, "You plan on letting the corpse remain in the room for a few days?"

Lauwis forced a smile and replied, "Yea, thankfully, the weather became colder recently. I can move the body onto the table at night. When we eat, I can carry her to the bed…"

Before he finished what he had to say, Frye suddenly interrupted, "I've left you money for the burial next to your wife."

After saying those words in absolute calmness, he exited the apartment directly, unbothered by Lauwis's shocked expression and gratitude that followed.

Klein followed closely and thought of a question.

If the weather was still as hot as June or July, how would Lauwis deal with his wife's corpse?

Pick a very dark night with strong winds, throw the corpse into the Tussock River or the Khoy River? Or just dig a hole and bury her?

Klein knew that the law requiring a cemetery burial had been established more than a thousand years ago, at the end of the previous Epoch. The seven major churches and imperial households from each country had approved the law in order to cut down on the number of water ghosts, zombies, and restless wraiths.

Each country provided free land, while each church was in charge of keeping watch and patrolling. They only charged minimum fees for cremation and burial in order to pay for the necessary labor force.

But even so, the truly poor still couldn't afford it.

After leaving 134 Iron Cross Street at Lower Street, the three Nighthawks and Bitsch Mountbatten parted ways. Silently, they took a turn to the nearby workhouse in West Borough.

As they got closer, Klein saw a long queue. It was just like when the people from the Foodaholic Empire on earth queued for a shop that gone viral on the Internet. The place was packed.

"There's about a hundred, no, closer to two hundred," he muttered in surprised. He saw the people queuing were in tattered clothes with numb expressions. They only occasionally looked towards the door of the workhouse impatiently.

Frye slowed down and said coldly, "There is a limit to the number of homeless poor each workhouse will accept daily. They can only take them

in based on the queue order. Of course, the workhouse will examine and refuse entry to those who fail to meet the criteria."

"The economic recession in the recent months has played a part too…" Leonard sighed.

"Those who don't manage to queue will have to figure out a way of their own?" Klein asked subconsciously.

"They can also try their luck in the other workhouses. Different workhouses have different operating hours. However, each one has the same long line. Some of them would wait from two in the afternoon." Frye paused. "The rest of the people mostly starve for a day. Then, they lose their ability to find a job and fall into a vicious cycle that leads directly to death. Those who can't withstand the hardship end up losing their struggle to stay on the good side of the law…"

Klein fell silent for a few seconds before letting out a sigh.

"The newspapers never publish any of this… Mr. Frye, I hardly ever hear you speak so much."

"I was once a pastor in a workhouse of the Goddess." Frye maintained his cold attitude.

When the three of them arrived at the door of the workhouse in West Borough, they showed their identity documents to the doorkeeper, who was eyeing the queuers arrogantly, before they were taken into the workhouse.

The workhouse was transformed from an old church. There were mattresses and hammocks all over the Mass hall. The pungent scent of sweat mixed with the smell of Athlete's foot permeated every corner.

In and out of the hall, there were many poor families. Some swung hammers to break rocks, some picked oakum; no one was free.

"In order to not let poor people rely too much on workhouses and turn into scoundrels, the Poor Law established in 1336 enforced a rule whereby every poor person can only stay in the workhouse for five days at most. Any longer than that, one would be cast out. During the five days, they have to do manual labor, such as breaking rocks or picking oakum. These are the same tasks that criminals in prison do," Frye explained to Klein and Leonard briefly without much emotion.

Leonard opened his mouth, and no one was sure if he was teasing or explaining, "When they leave this workhouse, they could go to another one. Of course, they might not be able to move in. Heh, perhaps, to some people, poor people are like criminals."

"… Picking oakum?" Klein was quiet. He didn't know what else to ask.

"The fibers of old ropes are actually a great material to seal the gaps in boats." Frye stopped and found a burnt mark on the ground.

A few minutes later, the director and pastor of the workhouse rushed over. They were both men in their forties.

"Salus started the fire here and only burnt himself to death?" Leonard asked, pointing at the ashen mark on the ground.

The director of the workhouse was a man with a broad, bumpy forehead. He scanned the area where Inspector Mitchell was pointing with blue eyes and nodded in affirmation.

"Yes."

"Before that, did Salus act strangely in any way?" Klein asked.

The director of the workhouse thought and said, "According to the person that slept next to him, Salus had been chanting 'The Lord has given up on me', 'The world is too filthy', 'I have nothing left', stuff along those lines. He was filled with resentment and hopelessness. But no one expected him to

break all the kerosene lamps and start a fire to burn the place down while everyone was sleeping. Thank the Lord, someone found out in time and stopped his wicked act."

Klein and Leonard then found a few people who had slept next to Salus the night before, and they also found the guard that stopped the tragedy. However, those people didn't have anything new to tell them.

Of course, they used Spirit Vision, divination, and other methods to check if any of the people were lying or misleading them.

"It seems that Salus long had the idea to take revenge and self-destruct. It seems to be a very normal case." Leonard waited till the director and the pastor left to express his opinion.

Klein pondered and said, "My divination tells me that there wasn't any supernatural factors influencing this case."

"Let's eliminate Salus's fire case temporarily," Leonard concluded.

Just then, Frye suddenly said, "No, maybe there is another possibility. For example, Salus acted at the instigation of someone else, a Beyonder who didn't take any supernatural measures."

Klein's eyes lit up as he echoed, "It's very possible, such as the Instigator from before!"

Instigator Tris!

But that wouldn't have any connection with Mrs. Lauwis's death… He thought, creasing his eyebrows lightly.

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CHAPTER 121
LEONARD'S HYPOTHESIS

After hearing Klein's and Frye's guesses, Leonard tugged on his collar and paced about, saying, "Then we have to investigate everyone in the workhouse who came into contact with Salus, as well as everyone he came across after he went bankrupt and was chased out of the house. It's very troublesome indeed… Time is of the essence. Let's split up and do a cursory check here, then head to the third reported death in the West Borough and leave the rest to the police."

"Alright," Klein answered without hesitation.

Frye didn't have any objections. He turned towards the people who had been sleeping near Salus last night.

Klein was about to find someone to question when he suddenly saw Leonard shooting looks at him. He was motioning at the side hall of the workhouse with his chin.

What does he want? Klein was a little lost. He acted as though nothing had happened and strolled around the hall, then followed Leonard into the side hall while Frye was distracted. They made their way through the partition to a silent corner which had no one else around.

"I have a hypothesis," Leonard suddenly said, stopping in front of a shattered window.

Klein looked around in confusion. "What's your hypothesis?"

Leonard with his deep green eyes, he returned a question, "If there were no supernatural factors, what do you think Mrs. Lauwis's outcome would've been?"

Klein thought for a moment, then said solemnly, "The same, just delayed by a week or two, perhaps a month. But to a family like theirs, they would've only seen the doctor when she really was at her limit. As long as her heart problems turned for the worse, there would be no way for her to be saved."

"Then what about Salus? If he hadn't been instigated by someone, what kind of end would he have?" Leonard asked again.

Klein pondered and said, "From the description in the information, Salus was already very angry about his bankruptcy, and was furious that no one saved him. I think that he would've exacted his vengeance sooner or later, but not at the people at the workhouse. He might've targeted the boss that made him bankrupt or the staff of the bank that seized his house."

"What would the result of his revenge be?" Leonard pressed on.

"Without a doubt, he had already decided to end his life. He would have died no matter what the result of his revenge was." Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Leonard nodded and revealed his signature flippant smile.

"Then can we conclude that Mrs Lauwis and Salus were both people fated to die soon?

Klein was a 'knowledgeable' keyboard warrior. Upon hearing the question, he immediately had a guess.

"You're saying that their deaths were moved forward by some supernatural factors? But why?"

"A more accurate description would be, their 'life force' had been shortened by some supernatural factor. It was stolen. And life force is the best material when it comes to summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses." Leonard smiled as he corrected Klein's guess.

"Summoning evil gods and devils or conducting terrifying curses…" Klein looked into Leonard's emerald eyes and said, half in doubt, "You seem to be very sure of this? But, for the time being, our investigation sample is only at two…"

Leonard laughed cynically. "Klein, there's no need for any pretense between us. I saw you break free from the control of Sealed Artifact 2-049, and I know that you're special. And you should be able to sense that I'm a little different from the average Beyonder."

His smile disappeared as he looked into Klein's eyes.

"I've told you that there are many special people in this world that can always do things others can't, such as you… and me.

"This world has a long history. There are many magical items that people wish to obtain, to control. They wish to become the stars of their own show. There aren't many people like that, but it's impossible that there are only one or two of them.

"I don't think that a Beyonder with his or her secrets is a bad person or an evil thug. I don't think that we even need to be clear on where their special abilities come from, and what they represent… As long as your actions are not endangering me, the Nighthawks, or Tingen City, then you're still my partner. Similarly, I hope that you'll look at me with the same attitude. Of course, it's best not to speak of this to the higher-ups. Those fogies are old fashioned and conservative, always thinking that special people like us will definitely lose control, definitely feel the pull and temptation of the evil gods or devils."

But I have more secrets than you can ever imagine… Klein thought to himself. He said frankly, "I share the same sentiments as you. I'll only look at your actions and your motives and don't care about how special you are. I will also try not to probe into your secrets."

After saying this, he added in his heart, *No, actually I do mind and am very curious, but I'm putting up with it for now. Hmm, Leonard thinks that he is the star of a show? What kind of encounters did he have, and what kind of magical items does he possess?*

Leonard unfastened the buttons of his shirt and nodded with a chuckle.

"I'm glad that we have this understanding.

"In action novels, this is called the meeting of two protagonists. The wheels of history are set in motion.

How shameless! Klein gave a perfunctory smile.

He knew that the phrase "wheels of history are set in motion" came from Emperor Roselle…

Leonard paced around quickly, his green eyes brightened as he curled the corners of his mouth.

"Alright, I'll be honest; I'm quite confident that the victims of these deaths would've died within the next three months, but their deaths have been brought forward to the past two weeks by someone, through some means. The other party's motive should be to summon evil gods or devils, or conduct a terrifying, large-scale curse."

"It is easy for the culprit to hide their murders, given that their victims already showed signs that they were going to die soon. This wouldn't attract the attention of the police department, or be disrupted by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind during the culprit's

preparatory phase…" Klein muttered to himself and analyzed the culprit's thought process.

Leonard smiled and agreed, "That's right. If three healthy, normal people were to suddenly drop dead, it would definitely attract attention and bring about an investigation."

"Then how are we going to find the altar used for the ritual? Regardless of whether the culprit wants to summon an evil god, devil, or conduct a terrible curse, he or she would need a sacrificial altar, a ritual. The harvested life force would also have to be stored in a similar place." Klein chose to believe in Leonard, for he didn't have any other clues and was unable to make any other deductions.

It doesn't hurt to try!

Leonard laughed and said, "Klein, isn't that within your professional domain? Can't you imagine what is happening around an altar like that?"

Without waiting for Klein to answer, Leonard described, "A thick aura of death with the altar at the center. There wouldn't be any living things other than the person conducting the ritual in a ten-meter radius. The surrounding temperature would be at least five degrees lower than the average temperature, with a cold wind blowing past it continuously… And the stolen life force of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest will remain within the altar, sealed by a wall of spirituality…"

Having said that, he looked at Klein and teased, "I think that you would be able to divine roughly where an altar with the following qualities would be."

Klein frowned slightly and replied solemnly, "As long as it's within Tingen City. Furthermore, I would need a quiet place where I wouldn't be disturbed. My house, for example. I would also need the personal belongings of Mrs. Lauwis and the rest, as well."

Klein's heart also skipped a beat. He felt that Leonard was a little too knowledgeable in the dark arts.

"No problem." Leonard laughed. He suddenly stepped past Klein and walked toward the hall, not saying anything more.

That man sure has a unique style… Klein cursed in his heart and followed.

When Leonard found Frye seriously taking notes, he put on a serious tone and said, "I have a hypothesis and was hoping that Klein would give it a try."

"What hypothesis?" Frye asked, appearing cold.

"I'll tell you if there is a result. I don't want to be laughed at by Rozanne and the rest." Leonard gave a whimsical excuse and changed the subject.

Frye didn't ask any further. He acted according to the instructions and obtained Salus's and Mrs Lauwis's personal belongings from the nearby police station, then met his partners at Klein's house.

"Wait in the living room and don't let anybody disturb me." Klein took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

It was about six now. Melissa might come back at anytime.

"You can trust us." Leonard put his hands on his hips and paced around the living room. Frye sat silently on the sofa.

Does Leonard have ADHD? Klein pouted and went to his room on the second floor. He locked the door and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

After which, he set up an altar and asked for the help of the goddess, eliminating any disturbances.

Then, Klein wrote a divination statement on a piece of paper.

"The position of the altar."

He gave a sweeping statement to prevent himself from missing out on any information.

Grabbing the piece of paper and the belongings of the dead, Klein laid down on his bed. He first recalled the scene Leonard described, then silently recited the statement seven times.

He didn't try using the world of fog, firstly, because that weird and mysterious Leonard was downstairs. Who knew if he would notice something weird about the ritual. Secondly, his Seer potion was about to be completely digested. It was likely that the aid of the ritual was sufficient for the success of his divination.

Klein would only consider finding an opportunity to enter the world of fog if he didn't get a result. After all, the summoning of an evil god or devil was something that could threaten Benson, Melissa, and himself!

With the help of Cogitation, he quickly entered the dream and saw a hazy, illusory, fragmented scene.

Soon after, an image floated before his eyes.

It was a two-story grayish-blue house bathed in a sunset glow. The windows of the first floor were shut tight and the dark curtains had no gaps. However, they expanded and contracted from time to time.

The soil around the house was dark brown, but nothing was growing in it. The garden around the house seemed to be covered in shadows, dilapidated, and dark.

There was a river flowing silently near the house.

…

Sometime later, Klein exited the dream, having not seen anything else.

Leonard's hypothesis was correct… Where could that building be? There are too many rivers in Tingen City, such as the West Borough, Southwest Borough, the harbor area, the university area… He opened his eyes and rubbed his temples as he thought, his expression serious.

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CHAPTER 122
TARGET BUILDING

2 Daffodil Street. Inside the living room that was painted with the luster of dusk.

Klein stood in front of the oriel window as he told Frye and Leonard.

"My divination revealed something. I saw a grayish-blue two-story building in my dream. The windows on the first floor were all shut tight, and the curtains were drawn. It's surrounded by a few meters of brown soil without any greenery or flowers. It also has a terribly gloomy garden, just like the kind you find in a horror story.

"The only characteristic that can be used to identify it is a nearby river, a slightly broad river.

"It might be the Tussock River or Khoy River. We could only find out through process of elimination. Hopefully we can still make it in time."

The Tussock River was the biggest river in the Loen Kingdom, coming down from the northwest where the Mirminsk mountain was. It flowed towards the southeast, passing by the Midseashire, Awwa County, and then passing through the capital, Backlund, and into the sea near Pritz Harbor.

The locations where it converged in Tingen City included the southwest corner of the West Borough and the harbor in the South Borough. The source of the Khoy River came from the northern York Mountain as it passed through the university district in the East Borough and locally merged with the Tussock River.

Those were the two main rivers around Tingen. The rest could only be considered streams, and none of them had an expansive water surface.

Upon hearing Klein's description, the pale and cold Frye nodded lightly in agreement.

Since there were no other clues, process of elimination was the only efficient method!

Just then, Leonard smiled and said, "Perhaps we can narrow down the possible locations of the target."

"How do we narrow down the possibilities?" Klein frowned and asked in reply as he looked at the silver vine-leaf pocket watch.

Leonard chuckled.

"A criminal with a plan and a goal would select targets somewhere far away from the location of his altar. This is a result of their natural instinct—to be safe.

"Only when there aren't many soon-to-be-dead people left in the areas far from his altar would he consider the nearer targets.

"So, we should read through the information again, exclude the areas where the number of death incidents rose rapidly above average standards.

Klein's eyes lit up when he heard that.

"Brilliant conjecture!"

At the same time, he sighed inwardly, *I really don't have the talent to be a detective!*

Frye nodded and picked up the documents on the coffee table and started reading it again.

After a few minutes, he deepened his hoarse voice and said, "There really is such a region, and there's only one possibility."

"Which area?" Klein asked.

Frye passed the thick stack of information to Leonard who was next to him. He pursed his thin lips and said, "West Borough."

It's the West Borough? Klein clenched his fist and immediately suggested,

"Then let's search the southwestern area of West Borough. That area isn't huge!"

"I agree," Leonard echoed as he waved the papers in his hands in agreement, as though he wasn't the one who suggested narrowing down the scope of their search.

…

The two-wheeled carriage slowly drove along the muddy road. Beside them, the red and orange glow of the sunset reflected off of a broad river that was colored with the twilight radiance of the sunset.

Klein and Frye looked out the windows from both sides of the carriage, inspecting one house after another. They were searching for a grayish-blue house with a dilapidated garden. If possible, they would take note if the curtains on the first floor was drawn.

Leonard leisurely sat in his original spot, leaning against the wall of the carriage as he hummed a popular local tune.

The dim scenery flew past, and Klein caught sight of a grayish-blue two-story building from the corner of his eye

In front of the building was a gloomy garden that appeared in ruins.

"Found it!" Klein said while suppressing his voice.

Before he finished his sentence, Frye and Leonard squeezed over to look out the window. There was almost no space between them.

As the carriage drew closer to the building, the dark curtains that were drawn on the first floor appeared before the three Nighthawks' eyes.

Klein didn't even need to divine whether they had the right building; he was completely certain that it was the building that he saw in his dream. That was where the evil altar was set up!

None of them stopped the carriage, but instead allowed the carriage driver to continue driving forward. They passed their target and continued away from it, as though they were just passing by.

When they could no longer see the building when they turned around, Leonard told the driver to stop the carriage.

"Klein, return to Zouteland Street in this carriage and tell the Captain to come here for assistance." Leonard snapped his fingers and smirked at his teammate.

Is he thinking of me as a rookie and that I shouldn't be involved in such a dangerous mission? This fellow is still quite a nice guy… Klein was stunned as he realized what Leonard meant.

Frye nodded in agreement.

"You just started combat training and your job is a support role."

I know, and a person who could kill so many in order to hold a ritual won't be an easy opponent. Only the Captain could make this situation less terrifying… Klein took a breath and agreed rationally.

He looked at Leonard, then at Frye before forcing a smile and said, "Be careful."

"Don't worry, I cherish my life a lot. Until the Captain arrives, we'll only keep watch, and we won't get close." Leonard smiled.

Frye didn't say anything but only picked up his suitcase.

Klein was quiet for a while, he then took out a copper penny and said, "Let me divine once for you."

He chanted, "What will happen here will lead to a good outcome." He flipped the coin at the same time his eyes turned dark.

Dang!

The coin flipped into the air, then landed firmly in Klein's palm.

Klein looked and saw it was the King's head. He immediately let out a breath of relief.

"It's only a blurry symbol, so there are other interpretations. The most important thing is to be careful and prudent at all times," he explained to Frye and Leonard like a Seer would do.

Leonard had already turned around. He waved and jumped off the carriage.

"As naggy as my eighty-year-old grandma…"

Frye nodded seriously and got off with his suitcase.

Watching both his teammates head towards the target building, Klein touched the revolver in his armpit holster and told the driver, "Zouteland Street."

The driver, who had been hired by the hour, didn't object but allowed the horses to continue the journey.

…

36 Zouteland Street.

When Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company, Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and the others had already gotten off work. It was unusually quiet and dim.

Dunn was sitting on the sofa in the guest area. The gas lamp was unlit, and he seemed to blend into the darkness in his black windbreaker.

"Found any clues?" Klein, who was searching for the Captain, was given a shock by Dunn's deep voice.

Klein quickly turned around and looked into Dunn's gray eyes as he said, "Yes, we…"

He quickly told him about Leonard's bold hypothesis, his confirmation via divination, and the subsequent discovery of the house.

As for Leonard's confidence and the uniqueness that Leonard had discussed, they were unimportant and obviously not worth mentioning.

Dunn cut in from time to time. When the briefing ended, he abruptly stood up and walked towards the door.

When he was almost down the stairs, he turned around and said, "I almost forgot; you stay here just in case there are any emergencies here."

"Alright." Klein nodded solemnly.

At that very moment, other than Kenley who was on duty guarding Chanis Gate, the other Nighthawks were busy in the field.

Dunn Smith ran down a few steps and suddenly stopped. As he put on his hat, he shouted at Klein through the door, "Lock the door and follow me. Heh, we won't need you to join the battle. First, you can get a sense of the atmosphere, and second, we might require the assistance of ritualistic magic during the final search or inspection. Remember, until everything is over, you have to be at least fifty meters away. You cannot get close to the building!"

Klein was stunned and nodded firmly.

"Alright!"

…

The sun sank beneath the horizon, and the surging Tussock River turned eerie and dark.

Dark clouds obscured the crimson moon, making the grayish-blue two-story building look like a monster hidden in the shadows.

The garden before the building was extremely quiet. It was as though it didn't have any insects, nor any other forms of life.

Klein looked at the scene from a distance, his palms sweating and his body shivering.

He felt that there were countless terrifying things hidden, waiting, and hungry for a bloody feast.

He watched Dunn, Leonard, and Frye move carefully towards the target building, blending into the darkness.

…

On the second floor of the grayish-blue building, in the bedroom without any lights.

A gentle and sweet young maiden with a round face was seated before her dressing table, looking carefully at her face after the complicated skin care routine she had just completed.

There was a silver mirror next to her right hand, its surface coarsely ground, almost unable to reflect a figure.

Suddenly, a stream of blood seeped out from the mirror.

The expression of the gentle and sweet-looking Trissy suddenly grew grave. She stood up, walked to the window, and looked out in silence.

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CHAPTER 123
BEYONDER BATTLE

Vines grew all over the dilapidated garden outside the glass windows. The river flowed softly, reflecting the stars in the sky as warm glows suffused out of the nearby buildings.

Everything was silent, as if awaiting the arrival of night.

Trissy, who had ordinary features which combined to make her look surprisingly beautiful, retracted her gaze and walked quickly towards the clothes rack to retrieve a long black robe fitted with a hood.

She quickly put the robe on, fastened the buttons and belt before pulling the hood over her head, transforming herself into an Assassin.

Trissy raised her right hand and swiped her face, immediately turning her appearance under the hood blurry.

Right on the heels of that, she grabbed a handful of shimmering powder from the hidden pouch near her waist and scattered it over herself while reciting an incantation.

Trissy's figure started to disappear bit by bit, her outline vanishing like how pencil marks were being erased by an eraser.

She silently left the bedroom after completing her concealment spell. She moved to the opposite room and then opened the non-grilled window.

With a light leap, Trissy stood on the window sill and looked over the grassy plains to the back of the building. She looked down at the steel fence

that had seemingly fused with the night. There, she saw Corpse Collector Frye who was silently making his way over the fence.

She took in a deep breath and fluttered down like a feather, stepping onto the grassy field without a sound.

Frye, who was wearing a black windbreaker, cautiously surveyed the surroundings with his custom revolver in his hand, seeking out vengeful spirits or evil spirits that might appear.

He could see such entities directly!

Trissy approached Frye silently, made her way behind him. It was unknown when a dagger smeared with 'black paint' appeared in her hand.

Poof!

She struck quickly, plunging the dagger into Frye's lower back.

But at this moment, the scene in front of her shattered, as if everything was an illusion.

Trissy realized that she was still standing on the window sill, still looking over the grassy field and the steel fence.

Except this time around, it wasn't only Corpse Collector Frye who was standing outside the fence. There was also Leonard Mitchell who was aiming straight at the window sill, as well as Dunn Smith. The captain of the Nighthawks was hunched over as he pressed down on his glabella, his eyes closed as formless ripples spread outwards from him.

Trissy's pupils constricted. She understood that everything that had happened was just a dream. She had fallen asleep unknowingly!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Leonard and Frye fired three shots, accurately hitting the invisible target who was still waking up from her reverie.

Crack!

Trissy's figure started to appear, first cracking, then completely shattering into fragments of a rough silver mirror!

Inside the building, Trissy, who had used a substitution spell, turned around to escape. She followed the corridor and the steps, sprinting all the way to the first floor.

Whoosh! A cold sinister wind blew across the first floor, one that could freeze a person. Formless, transparent figures were numbly pacing around every corner of the building in a daze.

Trissy, who had lost her concealment, felt her temperature drop every time she passed through the spirits. She could no longer control her shivers when she finally reached the sacrificial altar.

The altar was a round table, with a figurine of a deity carved out of bone placed in the center.

This figurine was about the size of a grown man's head, with only a mere indication of her eyes, but the figure was that of a beautiful woman.

Her hair extended from her head to her heels, each strand clear and thick, as if they were poisonous snakes or tentacles.

There was only one eye situated at the tip of every strand of hair, some closed, others open.

There were many puppets strewn around the figurine. The craftsmanship of the puppets was crude. Names and relevant information were written on the puppets; for example, Joyce Mayer.

There were three candles on the table, flickering with a yellowish-green flame despite the cold, sinister winds.

Trissy bowed at the deity's figurine and quickly recited her incantations.

She then pushed away the puppets and extinguished the flames of the candles before picking the figurine up.

Whoosh!

The winds howled fiercely as they shook the closed windows violently.

Clank! Creak! Shards of glass flew around in all directions.

Frye, who had just made his way to the other side of the building, didn't dare to barge into the sacrificial altar recklessly. He shivered, feeling his blood turn cold and frosty. It was making his actions visibly slower.

Suddenly, he felt tightness around his heels as though they had been grabbed by something invisible.

An accentuated sense of coldness spread upwards from the point of contact. A Sequence 9 Beyonder would have turned completely numb by now. But as a Corpse Collector, Frye was no stranger to such situations.

He turned his revolver to the side of his heels and pulled the trigger. It was as if he could see who the enemy was, and exactly where it was.

Bang!

A silver demon hunting bullet pierced the air, causing a shrill howl in response.

The formless figure dissipated and Frye regained his ability to move.

Elsewhere, Dunn Smith, who wanted to reach the second floor by avoiding a frontal assault on the altar, was similarly affected by the cold winds. His body froze as he stopped right outside a shattered window.

Whoosh! The curtains behind the window lifted suddenly and engulfed Dunn, as if a monster had just opened its mouth to devour its prey.

The curtain wrapped around Dunn's head, seeming to have been imbued with life. Dunn's facial features began to press through the constricting cloth.

Dunn, who was about to be suffocated, stomped down with both feet. He straightened his knees and twisted his waist, loosening the curtain's grip with raw strength alone.

He grabbed a corner of the curtain around his head with his left hand and yanked it away before tossing it toward the ground.

Bang!

He fired a shot at the other half of the curtain behind the window, stopping it from attempting another assault on him.

The curtain stopped immediately as a dark red liquid oozed out from it.

Whoosh!

On the field, Leonard Mitchell was reciting his poems and was also hit by the cold sinister winds infused with the intense sensation of death. His teeth chattered, making it hard for him to enunciate his poems.

The messy weeds in the garden suddenly extended, wrapping themselves around his heels. A black shadow hurled itself at him along with the violent winds.

Leonard, whose body had become rigid, failed to fire in time. He could only pull back his shoulder and raise his arm.

Thud! The black shadow smashed into his forearm, the thorns on its body piercing his skin.

It was a pretty, bright-red flower, its origins unknown.

In pain, Leonard tossed aside the flower dyed with his blood.

Bang! He fired a shot at the spreading vines, causing dark red liquid to ooze out.

Tap! Tap! Tap! Leonard quickened his pace and charged towards the shattered window on the first floor where the altar was situated behind.

The vines retracted abruptly from where he had previously stood, as if hiding from something invisible.

Trissy took advantage of the chaos created by destroying the altar and a suspension-style ritual to conceal herself once again. She managed to fool the Spirit Visions of the Nighthawks and escape the pincer attack before making her way to a spot behind the three Nighthawks.

She extended her right hand, immediately causing a cold wind to blow. It carried the flower dyed with Leonard's blood right into her palm.

Trissy did not stop. With the flower in hand, she nimbly made her way over the steel fence and escaped in the direction of the Tussock River.

Leonard, who had just entered the first level, turned his head abruptly, as though he was listening to something.

His expression changed. He frantically pulled up his sleeve and looked at the wound caused by the flower.

With his constitution, the wound had already stopped bleeding. There was only some red swelling that remained.

Leonard's expression became grim. He pinched his left index finger and pulled his fingernail straight out!

His face contorted in pain, but he did not pause. As he recited something silently, he sliced open the coagulated wound with the fingernail. When the fingernail was dyed with his dark red blood, he pulled out a few strands of hair from his scalp and wrapped the fingernail with his hair.

Beside the Tussock River, Trissy slowed down. She shot her gaze toward the flower in her hand.

She was chanting something as a ball of black, illusory fire suddenly appeared in her palm.

The flames enveloped the flower, burning it to ashes.

After completing this, Trissy jumped into the river and submerged herself.

At the same time, Leonard tossed the blood-stained fingernail wrapped in his hair to the corner. He saw it burn and release a foul stench.

The fingernail and hair disappeared quickly, leaving only some dust behind.

Leonard heaved a sigh of relief. He entered the first level through the window and said to Dunn and Frye who were destroying the altar, "The target has escaped. But it's alright, our primary objective was to stop the ritual."

Dunn sighed and looked at the puppets on the table.

"She was very cautious and very powerful. She sensed us approaching her ahead of time, otherwise… she should be, at the very least, a Sequence 7 Beyonder.

"Give Klein the signal. Ask him to come over."

Through the brief interaction in the dream, he had determined that the enemy was female.

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CHAPTER 124
WRAPPING UP WORK

Klein was hidden in the shadows of a building dozens of meters away from the target building. He heard the faint sound of gunshots and the howling of violent winds.

If the enemy runs towards me, should I draw my gun or should I pretend that I didn't see him? He thought as he shivered in cold sweat.

A Beyonder that could, through various means, cut short the lives of others definitely wasn't a Sequence 9 or Sequence 8 Beyonder. They certainly wouldn't be someone that a Seer like him could fight against face to face. Even if he sacrificed himself, he might not be able to slow the target down enough for Dunn and Leonard to catch up with him.

It was fortunate that the Evernight Goddess, the Empress of Disaster, seemed to hear her 'loyal' guard's prayers. No one ran towards the location where Klein was hiding.

After a few minutes, he heard a melodious song coming from the target building.

Cocking his ears to the side so he could hear better, Klein confirmed that it was the popular local tune that Leonard Mitchell always hummed. It was filled with base words.

Phew. He let out a breath of relief. He held his gun in one hand and his cane in the other. He then walked out of the shadows towards the target building.

The popular local tune was the meeting signal that he had agreed upon with Dunn and the rest!

Klein took two steps and suddenly paused. He leaned his cane against the metal fencing and switched the revolver to his other hand.

Then, he took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally.

Klein waited till the topaz stabilized and immediately closed his eyes and entered a Cogitation state. He recited a divination statement, "The singing earlier was an illusion.

"The singing earlier was an illusion."

…

After repeating seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the pendant spinning counterclockwise.

"It's not an illusion…" Klein put away his pendulum, grabbed his cane, and quickly got close to the arch-shaped metal gate leading to the target building. He then passed the black cane to his right hand and held it with the revolver.

He extended his hands to touch the fence, intending to push it open, but he suddenly felt a piercing chill. It was as though someone had poured a bucket of ice down his neck without warning.

Klein hissed and jerked his hands back, his teeth clenched.

"It's just like winter here…" Under the dim starlight and distant street lamp, he looked through the garden behind the metal fencing. He saw the withered branches, fallen flowers, and leaves covered with white frost on the brown soil.

Amazing! Klein marveled in his head. He bent his fingers and tapped his glabella to activate his Spirit Vision.

He returned his silver-inlaid cane to his left hand and pushed it against the fence to open the closed gate.

The gate squeaked, and he passed through it sideways. He stepped onto the stone path that led directly to the grayish-blue building. On both sides of the path were twisted plants that seemed to resemble ghouls in the dark.

The scene reminded Klein of various horror stories and paranormal films.

He subconsciously slowed down his breathing and walked faster. However, after just a few more steps, someone suddenly patted his left shoulder.

Badump! Badump! Klein's heart skipped, then started thumping rapidly.

He raised his right hand, aimed his revolver, and slowly turned around to look.

In the dim light, he saw a flimsy branch that had nearly fallen off.

"This is what we call 'scaring ourselves'?" Klein twitched the corner of his lips, waved the cane, and knocked the branch off.

He continued moving forward as faint sobs sounded in his ears. Blurry, translucent "shadows" appeared before his eyes.

These shadows had swarmed over after feeling the breaths of a living person and the warmth of flesh and blood.

Klein jumped in fright and immediately ran into the door of the grayish-blue building.

This is what the Captain meant by "getting a sense of the atmosphere?" It's much scarier than the last time I helped Sir Deweyville… The resentment of

that aggrieved spirit is more "rigid" than the shadows. She hadn't taken the initiative to attack back then… He thought as he walked towards the altar in the middle of the living room. It was a round table full of crudely made puppets. Three unlit candles stood amidst the puppets.

Dunn Smith stood right before the altar with his back to Klein. He took one puppet after another and looked at them.

Corpse Collector Frye looked at the floating shadows and extended his hand in an attempt to comfort them, but all his hand did was pass through them helplessly. The shadows didn't attack him, seemingly recognizing him as one of their own.

When Leonard Mitchell noticed Klein's arrival, he changed his tone, turning his voice softer but charming.

"Calm is the morn without a sound,

"Calm as to suit a calmer grief.

"And only thro' the faded leaf,

"The chestnut pattering to the ground [1] ."

…

In the soothing recitation of the poem, Klein seemed to see a clear lake reflecting the moonlight and a crimson moon hanging quietly, high in the sky.

The restless shadows calmed down and stopped chasing after the warm breath of the living Nighthawks among them.

Dunn put down the puppet in his hand, turned around, and said to Klein, "This is a ceremony for a terrifying curse. It's fortunate that we've already

destroyed it.

"First prepare a ritual to comfort the remaining spirits, then try to communicate with the spirits of the dead and see if you can get any clues from them."

Klein, who realized that he was no longer a burden, immediately held his chest out and said, "Yes, Captain."

He reached the altar in a few steps and extended his hands to sweep the puppets off of the round table.

At that moment, he noticed from the corner of his eyes that every puppet had a name and a corresponding message.

"Captain, did you discover anyone you know?" Klein asked in passing.

Then, he glanced at Dunn as Dunn looked at him. Both of them fell silent.

I'm so silly… Why would I ask any questions that tests the Captain's memory! Klein nearly covered his face and sighed.

If it were any other boss, they would definitely find an opportunity to make my life difficult because of this. Luckily, the Captain will forget about this… I wonder if that's an advantage or a disadvantage? He thought, half glad, half joking.

After a short silence, Dunn seemed to finally be capable of differentiating reality from the dreamworld. He replied, "There's someone you know."

"Who?" Klein stopped, his hand still extended to put a candle back to where it was supposed to be.

"Joyce Mayer, the survivor of the Alfalfa tragedy," Dunn replied simply.

Joyce Mayer? Anna's fiancé… Klein suddenly thought of Salus in the workhouse. He seemed to have been instigated and misled by someone, causing him to bring forward his rage and committing arson.

Klein retracted his right hand and said in a deep voice, "Instigator Tris?"

"He used the lives that were cut short as a sacrifice, intending to curse all survivors of the Alfalfa tragedy? Because he didn't know who uncovered his involvement and lodged a police report…"

If Tris took revenge directly, it would have been impossible to wipe out all the targets scattered throughout Tingen. After two or three murders, he would've been noticed by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind. Then, he would've lost his chance to continue his murdering spree. Klein filled in the blanks of why Tris had started all this.

Dunn nodded first, then he shook his head.

"Not all survivors, but only survivors in Tingen. His curse ritual can only affect the people within this range."

"Besides, the host of the ritual is a female, not Tris."

Klein creased his eyebrows and asked, "Perhaps it's an expert that the Theosophy Order sent to help Tris?

"Yes, the origins of the Theosophy Order might involve the Demoness Sect. It's fairly normal for their experts to be female."

Dunn smiled and said in his deep voice, "I agree with your judgment. Although we only encountered that woman and not Tris, there are guesses that we can make. Such as, the woman and Tris don't stay together. Or, that Tris was out looking for people who are dying soon."

Klein didn't say anything further. He set the three candles in place, took out the Full Moon Essence Oil, crimson sandalwood, and other ingredients, and

set up the altar quickly.

After he used a silver dagger to make a sealed wall, he started praying to the Evernight Goddess, the Mistress of Calm and Silence. He prayed that the shadows inside and outside the house would be comforted completely.

Unfortunately, in the subsequent attempt to communicate with the spirits of the dead, Klein could only see a little of what the spirits had seen before their deaths. There weren't any useful clues.

After settling the shadows into a peaceful sleep in the dark night, he ended the ceremony and removed the spirituality wall. He then shook his head and told the others,

"The backlash from the disrupted ritual caused severe damage and the remnant images of the host were lost."

Dunn wasn't surprised. He pointed at the stairs and said, "Let's look around on the second floor and give it another try."

"Okay." Klein, Leonard, and Frye nodded in agreement.

The three Nighthawks went up the stairs to the second floor and parted ways to search through each room.

In the end, they met in a bedroom that was filled with a faint aroma. They saw messy dresses lying around and open boxes.

Dunn took up a box from the dressing table and smelled it before asking, "Are these cosmetics?"

"To be exact, they are skin care products. Ever since Emperor Roselle, they were not lumped together with a broad term," Leonard explained with a smile. "Captain, as a gentleman, there are certain things you have to know."

Klein didn't join their discussion but cast his gaze towards the mirror on the dressing table.

There was an obvious crack on the mirror, and there were shattered pieces on the rug beneath.

"The Beyonder left in a rush. She didn't destroy it entirely…" he suddenly said in a deep voice. "Maybe I could give this a try."

"I'll leave it to you," Dunn replied in confidence.

Klein quickly brought the candles up from the first floor and lit them in front of the shattered mirror.

Under the dim, flickering candlelight, he took out the items like Full Moon Essence to create a spirituality wall.

After Klein prepared everything, he stood before the mirror that reflected the lights of all three candles and chanted in Hermes,

"I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"I pray for the mirror to receive a brief restoration, I pray for it to show every person that it reflected in the past month."

…

As the incantation was being recited, a strong wind suddenly howled within the spirituality wall.

The shattered pieces of the mirror swirled off the ground and returned to their original locations.

The mirror that was covered in cracks suddenly rippled with a gloomy brilliance. Klein wiped his hands over it and a human figure suddenly appeared in the frame. But that figure wasn't Klein.

It was a gentle and sweet looking young maiden with a round face. Perhaps it was because the mirror was broken or perhaps it was because the backlash of the interrupted ritual that affected the second floor as well. Her facial features were blurry and her actual appearance wasn't exactly clear.

But even so, Klein found the person unusually familiar.

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CHAPTER 125
BOLD IDEA

When faced with a strange sense of familiarity, other Sequence 9 Beyonders might try their best to recall or even disregard and forget about it. But a Seer was different. Klein immediately ended the ritual and dispelled the wall of spirituality. He took out a piece of paper and wrote on it a statement: "The source of the sense of familiarity."

After which, he sat on the edge of the bed in the room and silently recited it with the piece of paper in hand.

Seven times later, his pupils became darker. He fell asleep with the help of Cogitation and started conversing with his own spirituality.

In the hazy, contorted world, Klein saw a carriage. He saw a young lady wearing a long gray dress.

This lady had smooth black hair, her face a little round. She had a gentle and pleasant demeanor, but her body was shivering unnaturally.

The image flickered and once again, Klein saw this young, pretty lady at the underground market. She was squatting and conversing with someone.

The dream receded quickly and Klein woke up, understanding why the image he saw in the mirror was so familiar.

He had met this person before!

The first time was at Daffodil Street, in the district near Iron Cross Street. The Captain and the rest were chasing down Instigator Tris that night…

There must be a connection. Klein thought for a few seconds, then set up the ritual once again. He asked for the help of the Goddess to sketch the portrait of the enemy in his memory.

Dunn and the rest had been waiting silently, without interrupting Klein unnecessarily. Only when he was done sketching did they crowd over and inspect the portrait.

"You met her before?" Dunn asked.

Klein nodded slightly and answered simply, "Yes. I saw her at the public carriage stop on Daffodil Street the night when you were going after the Instigator. It was in the district near Iron Cross Street."

"Then, there's a good chance that she was the enemy just now. The partner of the Instigator." Dunn nodded in thought.

Leonard suddenly chimed in, "Don't any of you feel that this portrait is very familiar? She looks a lot like Instigator Tris!"

Klein froze, immediately casting his gaze at the portrait again and studying it carefully.

"Yeah, they look very similar indeed. Round face, narrow eyes, gentle demeanor…" The more he looked at the portrait, the more he felt that what Leonard said made sense. The biggest difference was that Instigator Tris had ordinary features while the young lady could be considered pretty.

Klein raised his head and looked at Leonard, noticing that he was signaling something to him by raising his brows.

What does he mean? Klein was confused.

Dunn Smith guessed, "She could be the Instigator's sister. Maybe like her brother she joined the Theosophy Order or the Demoness Sect."

Leonard sighed after he realized how bad Klein was at reading his mind. He said in a serious tone, "I have a bold idea."

"What idea?" Dunn asked.

Leonard described succinctly, "I think that this person is Instigator Tris!"

"What?" Frye exclaimed in shock.

Dunn creased his brows and said, "What you mean is that Instigator Tris is actually female, or a male who's pretending to be a female? No, from the dream, I can confirm that she's female."

Klein had been exposed to many creative and ridiculous plots after all. He took another look at the portrait and immediately had another guess.

"Could it be that Instigator Tris became a female?"

That could explain many things. For example, why would the trail leading to Tris suddenly sever? Why couldn't they find any traces, even with divination? Perhaps because there was a fundamental change to their target! The only question was how he could change into a woman in such a short span of time. And it appeared to be rather simple… He had pretty decent looks after his transformation even. I mean, to be honest, she's pretty attractive… Klein thought, distracted.

Leonard nodded in relief, "Yes, that's my theory. This can perfectly explain why Instigator Tris had seemed to vanish. It also fits with the strange fact that the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect are all female."

Dunn and Frye were momentarily at a loss for words.

Even though they had seen many monsters and wondrous things, it was their first time dealing with a transformation like this!

"What you mean is that there are a considerable number of women in the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect that used to be men?" Dunn asked. He didn't wait for an answer before saying, "That could be possible… Perhaps it's their, no, the unique characteristic of their potion."

Klein shivered a little as he listened. He felt that the potion of the Demoness Sect was a trap!

"Let's hope that a similar potion doesn't exist in the pathway of the Seer… No, definitely not. That is the pathway of the Demoness. Even the name of the potion sounds wrong. But I still don't know what the corresponding Sequence 1 to Seer is…" Klein subconsciously started praying to the Goddess.

"Can potions accomplish such a thing?" Frye asked with a little disbelief.

Leonard laughed and threw up his hands.

"Even a mid to low sequence potion can cause unimaginable changes. After all, they all originated from the Creator."

Dunn turned to look at Klein. "Try to divine where the target will appear next."

"Alright." Klein went over to the pile of dresses and picked out one with mixed emotions. He spread it over the carpet.

He held his cane over the dress and recalled the target's features and relevant information. He then began to recite in his heart.

"Tris's… no, Trissy's whereabouts

"Trissy's whereabouts."

…

Seven times later, Klein's pupils turned from brown to black. Wind started to blow around him.

His left hand released his cane, allowing the black cane to wobble.

Despite the shaking, the cane failed to fall. It stood tall in its original position.

"There's an interference…" Klein said with a deep tone.

An interference implies that our assumptions are correct!

That lady just now was most probably Instigator Tris, no, Trissy!

Upon seeing this, Dunn nodded indiscernibly.

"They live up to the reputation of the Demoness Sect which has been active since the last Epoch…"

Since Tris had transformed into Trissy, Dunn deduced that she wasn't part of the Theosophy Order, but the Demoness Sect.

Surveying the surroundings, Dunn sighed and said, "We can search for her through different means, such as where these clothes came from or the owner of this house. We can also get the police department to patrol the train stations and piers."

We might be able to get some clues like that, but Trissy will definitely have had enough time to leave Tingen. Yes… I'll try it again above the gray fog when I'm back at home. Klein was cautious of people like Trissy who wanted to unleash a massacre on a whim. He wanted to desperately find her and execute her on the spot.

"Leonard, head to the police department and gather a group to wrap up things here. Klein, you can go back and rest now…" Dunn rubbed his temples and paused for a few seconds. He said to Klein, partially to test him

and also to teach him. "How would you have handled this evening's mission? Assume that me, Leonard, and Frye are the only members on your team."

Klein creased his brows and thought for more than ten seconds.

"I'd first use divination to ascertain if the ritual would take effect soon. If the answer was negative, then I'd stick to observing and not approach. Then I'd notify the police department to deploy personnel around the area, as well as gather at least five cannons to bombard the entire building till wherever Trissy was hiding was leveled.

"She could either be blasted to death in the building, or attempt to flee amidst the cannon fire. This would easily expose her. Until then, I would station you and the rest at different spots…"

He got more and more excited as he continued. He felt that his idea was simple and effective, barbaric and decisive. It was very safe and very appropriate!

Dunn, Leonard, and Frye were dumbfounded. They didn't say anything for a long time.

"Captain, is that not a good idea?" The excited Klein's heart thumped rapidly when he saw that they had no reaction.

Dunn was silent for a few seconds before he said, "No, it is a good idea. But the premise is that we have to confirm that forceful destruction of the altar wouldn't create a more disastrous outcome… Sigh. As longtime Nighthawks, we're accustomed to relying on ourselves, our powers as Beyonders, and guns in all circumstances. We're not used to allowing normal people to come into contact with supernatural incidents…"

Alright, I was always an ardent fan of firepower bombardment… Klein added in his heart.

…

Klein and Leonard walked to the carriage station about five hundred meters away before they saw it.

After waiting for a while, they returned to Iron Cross Street. One went to the nearby police station, while the other returned to Daffodil Street.

When Klein arrived at his front door, he adjusted his clothes and made sure that everything was alright before fishing out his keys and opening the door.

Melissa and Benson were in the living room, quietly doing assignments and reading books respectively under the light from the gas lamp.

Benson must be tired after toiling at work the entire day; yet, he perseveres in his studies after he comes home. What a determined man… I can't do that, all I can think about now is lying down… Klein glanced at his brother and smiled, giving a silent greeting by raising his hand.

Benson smiled and said, "I now understand the price behind a handsome salary."

"There's a price for everything in this world. There's something we must give before we can gain anything in return," Klein said, leaving his cane on the rack next to the door.

"That's apparently something Emperor Roselle said, right?" Melissa stopped writing and looked up.

The Tingen Technical School was different from universities and public schools. There was only two weeks for summer break, from late July to early August. Their lessons resumed the moment the hottest days were over.

"Is that so? I don't remember…" Klein replied, his expression a little rigid.

He took off his hat and headed upstairs. He intended to divine Trissy's whereabouts as soon as possible.

Suddenly, he heard his stomach rumble. He felt intense hunger pangs.

Oh right, I haven't had dinner. But the note I left said that the security company would provide food and asked them not to leave any food for me… Seriously, Captain, you actually forgot about it… Klein's expression changed several times as he intended to pretend that he was full.

At that moment, Melissa turned and looked at him. She pointed to the kitchen and said, "We left a small piece of lamb chop and a bowl of thick vegetable soup for you. There are a few sticks of bread left too."

After saying this, she buried her head back into her work and muttered to herself, "I felt that meals provided by work wouldn't be too good, probably making people lose their appetite…"

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CHAPTER 126
DIVINATION ISN'T ALL-POWERFUL

Sis, you worry too much, no—you're just so meticulous! Klein was suddenly energized. He smiled and said, "Melissa, your concern is very reasonable. It's true that I'm actually a little hungry. Yeah, let me change and take a shower."

Although his mouth was already watering, it was even more important to confirm Instigator Trissy's whereabouts!

No one knew what insane measures that bastard would take in order to exact revenge on society!

"Okay." Melissa didn't lift her head but continued her revision.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein ran to the second floor and entered his bedroom.

He locked the door, took off his jacket, and armpit holster. Then, he took out a simple silver knife from the drawer.

After sealing his room with a spirituality wall, he took a breath, steadied his emotions, and walked four steps counterclockwise.

After the usual incantation, Klein appeared once again in the lofty palace above the gray fog. He was getting used to the mad ravings that he heard during the transportation process.

Having completed a few rituals that day, he massaged his temples as he was slightly tired. He willed a piece of brown goatskin to appear on the long bronze table.

Klein thought seriously, then wrote down the divination statement: "Trissy's whereabouts."

He wasn't sure if the name was written correctly, but he could use the girl's appearance and other detailed information as a guide as well.

He held the goatskin and leaned back into the chair. He recalled the things related to Trissy in his head, then recited the divination statement seven times.

He emptied his mind, closed his eyes, and entered a dream state with the aid of Cogitation.

In the illusory scene amidst the fog, he saw a steam engine that spurted dense smoke and sparks. He also saw the rows of leather seats in a clean train carriage.

The gentle and sweet-looking Trissy with her round face and long eyes sat near a window. There was a checkered fishnet hat on the table before her.

Klein made repeated attempts to confirm the train number, but he failed to discern it.

Soon, he couldn't stand the pressure and left his dream. The long bronze table and illusory crimson stars appeared before his eyes again.

"I could only confirm that Trissy took the steam locomotive and left Tingen. There weren't any more clues… Sigh, it seems like this mysterious space only helps me eliminate interferences, but it doesn't do much to enhance the standard of my divinations…" Klein rapped the edge of the table and thought about his next step.

Through the divination, he could be entirely certain that the target had once been Instigator Tris. The new Trissy, however, was already fleeing Tingen. Given the circumstances, he didn't think his new divination would help Dunn.

Klein quickly made a decision. "Captain already said that he would send a telegram to Backlund, Enmat Harbor, and other main stops along the railway, so they Trissy will be placed on the wanted list throughout the country. I won't report the divination result then, in case it would draw suspicion towards me…" Klein quickly made up his mind, because regardless of his warning, Dunn was already using the most appropriate measures to follow up on the matter.

Since he couldn't see the train number in the dream divination, using the spirit pendulum and other methods would be equally ineffective, even if he attempted to do so by process of elimination.

It was just like the situation with the red chimney.

At that moment, he felt mentally drained, so he didn't stay above the gray fog any longer but enveloped himself with his spirituality and simulated the feeling of falling.

When he "returned" to his room, his mind was filled with the thought of tasty, glistening mutton.

"I must add some fennel… Praise the Lady!" Klein swallowed his saliva, swiftly removed the spirituality wall, and opened his door.

…

The next morning at twenty minutes to nine, he entered the Blackthorn Security Company with his cane in hand.

"Good morning, Klein! I have good news!" Rozanne waved her hands excitedly from behind the reception desk.

Klein eyes lit up as he asked, "We caught Trissy?"

"Trissy? Who is she?" The green-dressed Rozanne looked lost.

"… You probably don't know her. What's the good news?" Klein redirected the topic.

Rozanne replied with a glowing smile, "The Captain's request has been approved. The police department is going to transfer two police staff members who have come across supernatural incidents to be clerks here! I finally don't need to frequently stay up all night! Praise the Lady!"

"That's great news," Klein echoed sincerely.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries with Rozanne, he went through the partition and went underground. He planned to continue with his mysticism lessons.

When he passed the Captain's office and the Nighthawks' recreation room, he popped his head in and looked around. He saw that Dunn, Leonard, and the rest were still there. It meant that the search and elimination investigation the night before had failed to return anything worthwhile. The rest would be handed over to the police department, so that they could take care of the tedious follow-up tasks.

At first, Klein wanted to chat with the Captain to get an update on the situation. But he saw that Captain was busy typing telegrams, so he decided not to disturb him. He could ask the Captain again at lunch.

He went underground by following the stairs and saw the two classic gas lamps in their metal racks. He saw the ever-quiet corridor which was lit up by the light behind the glass.

He breathed in the cold but refreshing breeze, took a few steps, and suddenly stopped.

He suddenly looked towards the gas lamp and his eyebrows gradually creased.

He had made a crucial mistake!

A mistake that could only be made by someone with knowledge from Earth!

In his divination above the gray fog the night before, Klein had seen Trissy taking a steam locomotive. Hence, he subconsciously believed that it was something happening at that moment.

But—this world had yet to invent electric lights or similar equipment. When the sky grew dark, there were almost no steam locomotives in operation that ferried humans. Klein, who was accustomed to trains which operated at night, had instinctively missed out on that fact!

In other words, it wasn't something that happened last night!

It was a scene from the future!

Which meant that it was going to happen that day or the day after!

Klein's heartstrings tightened and he paced back and forth. Then he went upstairs again.

He knocked and opened the door to the recreation room, and he saw that Leonard was reciting a poem by the window, looking helpless.

Klein ignored Kenley, Royale, and Seeka Tron who were playing cards. He looked towards Leonard and said, "I have a question for you."

"Would it be that you want to learn tricks to entertain the ladies?" Leonard teased, putting down Selected Poems by Roselle.

He exited the recreation room and followed Klein halfway down the stairs that led underground. He then looked into Klein's eyes and said with a chuckle, "It seems like you did a successful divination last night."

Klein didn't explain further but said straightforwardly, "I divined that Trissy will leave on a steam locomotive."

After their conversation at the workhouse in the West Borough, he didn't mind appearing slightly special before Leonard.

"Steam locomotive, the earliest train is at seven in the morning…" Leonard took out his pocket watch from his shirt and flipped it open to take a glance. "No time to waste! I'll tell the Captain that I received a reliable tip."

He quickly went upstairs and left the Blackthorn Security Company. After waited downstairs for a few minutes, he returned and went into Dunn Smith's office.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and watched the Captain send a telegram after gathering the other Nighthawks who were playing cards. They soon left out the door.

Recalling what happened earlier, he felt conflicted. It was a different lesson than the one he received from the death of the suited clown. He had committed a mistake with similar characteristics which made him seem to understand this lesson more, leaving a deeper impression on him.

Turning past the armory and entering the duty room, he took off his top hat and coat, then hung them onto the clothes rack naturally.

Old Neil had just finished making himself some hand-ground coffee. He happily took a sip and asked, "Would you like one?"

"Alright." Klein sat down, as carefree as if he had returned home.

Old Neil glanced at him and frowned, quipping, "Still three cubes of sugar with a spoon of milk? You're such a sweet tooth. This is harmful to your teeth and your body."

"No, no, no, I only like it sweet when I'm drinking coffee. When I have grilled steak or roasted meat, I prefer rose salt, black pepper, fennel, and other condiments." Klein always believed that he was a fan of all flavors.

Old Neil finished the coffee quickly. He pushed it over and said, "Do you want to take a break or start straightaway?"

"Let me settle down for a few minutes. The Captain and the team got a tip about Trissy's whereabouts, and they are on the way to the steam locomotive station. I wonder what the outcome will be…" Klein sighed.

Old Neil clicked his tongue and said, "Is the tip detailed enough? Are they sure which train it is?"

"No, it's not confirmed," Klein said, pursing his lips.

Old Neil suddenly laughed. "Under such circumstances, the possibility of failure is much higher than success. Trissy should be a Sequence 7 Beyonder and a Beyonder at that level won't be captured so easily. Heh heh, don't rely on divination, divination isn't all-powerful. You'll only obtain symbolic signs which are very easy to interpret them wrongly or ignore something."

Klein recalled the mistake that he made this time and felt melancholic. He nodded sincerely.

"Yeah, divination isn't all-powerful."

After he said that, he sighed. His mind, body, and soul suddenly entered a magical state. He leaned backwards slightly, intending to let out a breath. Just then, he suddenly heard an illusory shattering noise in his ear.

He felt something dissolving inside him, blending together with his spirit.

Klein half-closed his eyes and experienced the unique and indescribable feeling in silence.

Klein didn't need anyone to tell him that it was a result of the complete digestion of the Seer potion.

…

The first town that the Tussock River passed by after it flowed through Tingen City was called Wienia. It was also the first stop from Tingen to Backlund for the steam locomotive.

On the platform, Trissy changed into a long beige dress and put on a woman's circular hat. Fine fishnet gauze hung down from the edge of her hat, covering half her face. Her appearance became blurry and indiscernible.

She had already sent a telegram to her partner in Tingen, to remind the other person to be careful. She told them that she had used money she burgled to buy a steam locomotive ticket to Backlund.

The reason Trissy didn't get on the train from Tingen but went downstream to Wienia was because she still had her instinct and rich experience as an assassin.

Woo!

A train let out a long and sharp whistle as the long metal behemoth chugged to a stop next to the platform while spurting smoke and sparks.

Trissy didn't carry any luggage and entered the first cabin. At the same time, she decided to get off the train after three stations and enter Backlund through other methods.

…

In the basement of Saint Selena Cathedral, Klein closed his eyes and leaned backwards in his seat.

He took in the complete digestion of the potion, and he faintly saw one illusory star after another. Those stars seemed to share a baffling connection with him, and they seemed to want to lump together and fuse as one.

After the indescribable feeling of hunger and thirst receded, Klein returned to normal and stopped having any additional experiences.

But my mind feels a lot more relaxed and pure… He opened his eyes and thought.

At that moment, he knew that he had become a real, complete Seer.

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CHAPTER 127
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

The light of the gas lamp glowed through the glass, illuminating the guard room. Old Neil finished flipping through his newspaper, took a sip of coffee, and looked at Klein.

"How do you feel now? Have you calmed down? Or do you need a glass of wine, or an advance on your salary, or a day off?"

Klein, who had completely digested the Seer potion, was attempting to change his "switch" that activated his Spirit Vision with Cogitation. He didn't want it to be too obvious.

The present him no longer needed to rely on a physical motion to activate his Spirit Vision. Therefore, he could use a more concealed approach to achieve his goal; for example, stroking the joints of his middle finger with his thumb in quick succession, or clicking twice with his left molar.

Klein considered the situations in which he needed to use his Spirit Vision while holding a revolver in one hand and a cane in the other. Finally, he settled on clicking his molar. His left molar would be used to activate the Spirit Vision, and his right molar to deactivate it.

After repeatedly suggesting to himself, he completed the change. He then opened his eyes and smiled.

"I was merely too concerned about the Captain's operation. I don't need to calm myself down."

At the same time, he clicked his left molar twice and attempted to activate his Spirit Vision. He wanted to familiarize himself with this method as quickly as possible.

Cough! Cough! Cough! Old Neil started coughing violently. He coughed till his face turned red, like a cooked lobster.

"What happened?" Klein froze before asking in concern.

He scanned Old Neil's aura seriously, only to notice that the colors representing his health were still normal, only a little dull due to his age.

Old Neil coughed for nearly twenty seconds before earning respite. He felt for his cup of coffee and slowly took a sip. "Everyone makes mistakes, ahem. I choked on my drink just now… Shall we begin our mysticism lessons for today?"

"Alright." Klein silently clicked his right molars twice.

Klein was elated, yet frustrated that he had completely digested the Seer potion a week or two ahead of his prediction. He was naturally glad that he was freed from the risk of losing control and would advance soon, obtaining even more Beyonder powers. That was something anyone would be happy and excited about. But he was also frustrated, as it disrupted his plans and schedules.

Considering the fact that he still had to stay with the Tingen Nighthawks for some time, Klein thought that secretly advancing to Clown wasn't the wisest choice. If he did so, he would be constantly worried about being exposed, and he would be unable to use his abilities when there were missions, making it even more dangerous for himself.

He planned to learn from Spirit Medium Daly and submit an application to the higher-ups. He would use his contributions to obtain the recipe and extraordinary ingredients before officially advancing into a Sequence 8 Nighthawk.

But there was a difference between grasping a potion in a month and in a year. Klein could bear the scrutiny of the Holy Cathedral and become a talent for nurturing, but he didn't want the higher-ups to suspect him. He needed to find a convincing reason to explain his circumstances.

He had planned to use the time before the Seer potion was completely digested to lay some foundations with the Captain. For example, he would mention that he felt his spirituality become more active whenever he went to the Divination Club, or pretend to casually describe the laws of a Seer that he had derived from helping other people divine their fortunes. He could also mention that he didn't hear any voices that he shouldn't be hearing, or see things that are not for his eyes.

This way, the higher-ups of the Nighthawks would think that he had unintentionally learned something from Daly when completing his "mission" and had done a more thorough job than her.

This would make the higher-ups focus more on summarizing the laws and discovering the "acting method," reducing the suspicion placed on Klein.

That way, I could even help the Captain and the rest learn about the acting method… Klein added in his heart. He felt that Dunn Smith was a good captain. He had no glaring flaws other than his poor memory. Thus, he wanted to reduce the risk of Dunn losing control and make him more powerful.

Of course, Klein could also choose to apply after a year to avoid any risks. But the continuous coincidences and the red chimney he saw in his dream divination gave him no choice but to improve his abilities as soon as possible.

"I'll lay the foundation with the Captain three or four times over the next two weeks before formally submitting my request. At the same time, I can head over to the underground market to see if there are any of the necessary extraordinary ingredients. They will probably be very expensive…" Klein

quickly made a decision and focused his attention once again on the mysticism lessons.

Time passed quickly as lunchtime slowly approached. Old Neil finished his coffee and cleared the stuff on the table as he laughed.

"Your mysticism lessons will come to an end soon. From the test just now, it would seem that you can create charms for yourself now."

"That's my plan for the next few days." Klein heaved a satisfied sigh.

Charms were different from the protective amulets he had given Benson and Melissa. They needed to be carved with the help of ritualistic magic, and they had certain unique abilities that could be used in battle.

But a low-grade charm couldn't do everything. The spirituality it contained would decrease over time and had to be renewed once every two weeks. Also, he needed to activate them with specific incantations; it was impossible to use them at will.

Furthermore, the charms wielded by the Nighthawks were still limited to the "domains" of the Evernight Goddess. Klein could only make three different kinds of charms for the time being. The first was the Slumber Charm, and its effect was similar to Dunn Smith's and Leonard Mitchell's ability to put someone to sleep with their singing. The second was the Requiem Charm, which was able to soothe ghosts, souls, zombies, and the like. It could also deal with vengeful and evil spirits to a certain extent. The last was the Dream Charm; its abilities allowed the wielder to enter the dream of someone else.

These abilities were similar to the abilities of the Midnight Poet and Nightmare from the Sleepless Sequence, so Dunn and Leonard had no use for these charms. Corpse Collector Frye, Sleepless Royale, and Kenley would bring one or two along with them, but they hadn't needed them in a long time. They frequently brought their charms back to Old Neil so he could "recharge" them.

Old Neil glanced at Klein and smiled.

"I remember you saying that you practiced a lot this month and have run out of materials. Are you going to the underground market?"

Klein was taken aback at first before he nodded with a pained heart.

"Yes."

He clearly knew the prices of the ingredients. He could only hope that he succeeded in making the charms on his first try instead of wasting materials…

After being presented with the mission of bringing lunch underground, Klein put on his jacket and hat before returning to the Blackthorn Security Company on the second floor with cane in hand.

As he walked past the recreation room, he saw that Leonard and the rest had already returned and were enjoying their lunches.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He knocked on the Captain's door.

"Please come in." Dunn's mellow voice sounded.

Klein pushed the door open and took off his hat.

"Captain, did you catch Instigator Trissy?"

Dunn rubbed his temples and shook his head in exhaustion. "We didn't find her at Tingen Station, but according to the telegraph we received from Backlund, a passenger saw her in the first class carriage of the earliest train. Regrettably, she got off in the middle of the journey."

"How regrettable." Klein sighed even though he had expected this. "Divination isn't all-powerful…"

Dunn's gray eyes swept past him.

"There's no need to be depressed. It isn't easy to capture a Sequence 7 Beyonder. At the very least, we disrupted Trissy's evil ritual and saved at least forty innocent lives. Furthermore, we understand her situation now. She can no longer commit crimes as she wishes."

"If she tries to do something similar, she'll be noticed, discovered, and reported at any time. Sooner or later, she'll be captured by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind. It's even possible that she'll be killed."

"Let's hope that is the case. May the Goddess bless us." Klein drew the crimson moon on his chest.

Following that, he paused and pondered over his words.

"Captain, I haven't heard unwanted voices or seen unwanted visions for over a week now. Also, that's true even when I am in Cogitation or using my Spirit Vision."

"Really?" Dunn creased his brows, puzzled.

Klein immediately elaborated, "I feel that I'm not far off from achieving full control over the Seer potion. This could be due to my frequent visits to the Divination Club and helping others tell their fortune."

"… Why do you think so?" Dunn immediately changed his seating posture, his expression lost.

Klein added a stammer into his sentence. "E-every time I head to the Divination Club, I can feel my spirituality becoming more active, and every time I help someone divine something, my heart, body, and soul become more relaxed. I've also come up with a set of, well, a set of rules for a Seer. I've been following it strictly, just like how a Mystery Pryer can "do as you

wish, but do no harm." I found inspiration from this maxim and tried coming up with a maxim designed for Seers.

"I think that this might be an effective way to help Beyonders gain control over their potions faster and reduce the risk of losing control. Just like Madam Daly who has always been a Spirit Medium."

It was unknown when Dunn had taken out his pipe. He placed it at his nose and took a whiff, seemingly forgetting about Klein as he thought for a few minutes.

"A remarkable guess, and an interesting trial…"

Klein had only wanted to briefly mention it this time around to set up an underlying reason, so he did not say anything further. He switched to a half-joking tone and said, "Perhaps I'll be the fastest Nighthawk in history to gain control of a Sequence 9 potion."

"May the Goddess watch over you," Dunn blessed him, not taking him seriously. He then slipped into deep thought once again.

Witnessing this, Klein turned around and said his goodbyes before leaving the Captain's office.

He was closing the door to the room when he suddenly thought of another difficult question. *How in the world was he going to act as a Clown!*

Must I join a circus? There are no fixed circuses in Tingen, they're all roaming ones… Klein's expression became a little bitter.

Being a Seer was still a rather respectable occupation. Klein would still be able to hold his head up high even if he was spotted by someone he knew. But if he became a Clown, there was no way his reputation would hold!

Perhaps there are other ways of acting as a Clown. There were no circuses or clowns when the Blasphemy Slate was revealed to the world… Forget it,

I won't have the chance to advance for another two or three weeks, so there's no need to deliberate over this for now. Klein avoided the question and headed to the reception area. He walked toward Rozanne, Mrs. Orianna, and Bredt to fetch his and Old Neil's lunch.

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CHAPTER 128
THE IMPOVERISHED FOOL

After eating lunch, Klein only rested for half an hour before he rushed to the Shooting Club to practice with his revolver. He didn't dare to relax, not one bit.

After practicing his shooting skills day after day and expending more than a thousand bullets, he was finally shooting well enough to earn Dunn Smith's basic approval. He was pretty good at fixed-target shooting.

After practicing for a while, he put away his revolver and took the public carriage to a stop close to the house of his combat teacher, Gawain. Then, he walked for ten minutes before arriving at the door.

He changed into his knight training suit that had been left to dry in the sun. After running, skipping rope, lifting weights, squatting, and other exercises, not to mention footwork and punching training, he was covered in sweat and felt exhausted.

"Take a break for fifteen minutes." Gawain's blond white hair and deep facial lines made him look hard and stern. He took out his pocket watch and flipped it open to glance at the time.

Since they first began training, he had ultimately maintained his silence. He only spoke to Klein when there was a need to switch training methods or to correct one of Klein's mistakes whenever one arose.

Klein panted for air, but he didn't dare to rest straightaway. He paced back and forth slowly. The most direct feedback of his combat training was that he was much tanner. His skin had turned bronze under the sun.

Gawain put away his pocket watch and stood next to the crude training field behind his house. He crossed his arms as he watched Klein cool down. He was as quiet as a marble statue.

"Teacher, besides fighting with fists, would you teach me how to use a straight sword, broadsword, rapier, and spear?" Klein asked proactively. He was in a good mood, as he had just digested the Seer potion.

He had seen weapons like the straight sword and rapier in Gawain's collection room before. There was also chest armor and full body armor. He knew that Gawain wasn't only good at fighting hand-to-hand.

Bathed in sunlight, Gawain swept his gaze at Klein. He lowered his voice and replied, "It's useless for you to learn any of those. Those weapons have all fallen behind the times, and their only place is in museums or the private collections of collectors…"

He fell silent for a few seconds before adding with a voice that had experienced the vicissitudes of life, "They have been eliminated… You should focus on guns. Even combat is merely supplementary."

Klein looked at his listless teacher and chuckled as he spoke.

"I don't think so."

"Every minister, every Member of Parliament, every general, everyone of them thinks so," Gawain said, clenching his teeth.

Klein stopped and acted like he was a true keyboard warrior. He responded with ease and fluency, "No, they have merely retreated from the front lines of a battlefield. They still have their uses elsewhere.

"Why does combat have to be used against firearms? They could be used together. I believe a person who is more flexible, swifter in action, and quicker in response could use guns in a more effective manner."

When he saw Gawain's eyes suddenly sharpen, Klein turned smug and continued, "The other weapons aren't eliminated either. They only need some enhancement to be more portable…"

"… We could form a squad with high maneuverability. A group that's designed to circle the front lines and launch an attack from behind the enemy and fight right to their core. In such a small-scale surprise attack, a warrior who has outstanding hand-to-hand abilities and familiarity with various kinds of weapons could play an important role. You can imagine such a scene…"

Klein gave full play to his ability of knowing a bit of everything. He mixed and matched all the combat tactics the special forces on Earth had and described them to his teacher.

He wasn't sure when Gawain's breathing became heavier. He stood there without moving an inch, seemingly unwilling to break the scenes he imagined.

Klein stole a glance at the man's reaction. He felt smug in his head as he cleared his throat and said in a restrained manner, "Teacher, what do you think about my plan? Is there any possibility of realizing it?"

Gawain's body quivered as though he just awoken from a dream. He looked deeply into Klein's eyes and said, "Your break is doing you well. Repeat the whole set of exercises ten times."

Huh? Klein looked lost.

Very soon, he started running and snapped back to reality. He roared in his heart, *Ten sets? Teacher, no!*

I don't want to celebrate my complete digestion of the Seer potion like this!

Hey, didn't you gain any inspiration at all? …

Looking at Klein running towards the other side of the training field, Gawain suddenly uncrossed his arms and covered his face with one hand.

He closed his eyes tightly, and the wrinkles on his face were deep and obvious.

…

After nearly puking from exhaustion, Klein took a shower, changed clothes, and bade a still silent Gawain farewell. He took the public carriage and left.

He didn't return home directly but headed to Evil Dragon Bar near the harbor. He planned to inquire about the price of Beyonder ingredients and buy items for making charms.

On the way, Klein kept his mind on his tiny stash that he was carrying with him. He forced himself to stay alert and reached his destination with great difficulty.

"I need to save four pounds for the remaining balance that I owe to the detective company. I can only use three pounds and five soli tonight…" He touched the paper notes in his pocket before grabbing his cane and alighting the carriage.

At that moment, the sun had already begun slipping below the horizon. All the houses were gradually tainted with a twilight luster. The boxing matches and rat-baiting with dogs were already warming up in Evil Dragon Bar.

After passing through the billiard room and numerous rooms, Klein finally entered the underground market.

He looked to the left and right, but he didn't see Monster Ademisaul who was always active around there.

"Didn't Old Neil say that Ademisaul only managed to survive because the boss of Evil Dragon Bar feeds him?" Klein asked himself curiously.

As a Nighthawk, he remained vigilant to matters like that. He approached the brawny man guarding the door and asked, "Where's Ademisaul?"

The brawny man replied without a smile, "I have no idea where he's sleeping. He's been like that lately. He lies down in shivers and chants 'Dead, dead, all corpses, everyone has to die.'"

What scenes did he see this time? What triggered him? Klein creased his eyebrows slightly and asked for more details. He wanted to know where Ademisaul was sleeping, but the guard didn't know either.

When I'm done, I'll look for him via divination to see what he's been through… After taking note of this, Klein walked towards one of the two rooms at the end of the trading market.

According to Old Neil, the room on the left was for loans and repayment, while the room on the right was for the buying and selling of precious items, including Beyonder ingredients.

When he opened the door to enter the room on the right, Klein realized that there was a partition that separated it into two spaces, the inside and the outside. There were another three customers waiting on the outside.

He lowered his silk top hat and queued behind the three customers. He leaned his body forward and supported himself with the cane as he waited in silence.

Soon, the door of the partition opened and a customer in a bluish-gray harbor worker uniform came out. He kept his head low and left in a hurry.

Klein lightly clicked his left molar twice and looked at the man with Spirit Vision. He then looked at the other three customers. There was nothing wrong with them other than the usual minor illnesses that people had.

After another ten plus minutes, it was finally his turn.

He opened the door and entered the room that was lit with a kerosene lamp.

He locked the door and took the seat that belonged to the customer. He looked towards the old man wearing a black felt hat opposite him.

"I'd like to know what Beyonder ingredients you have, and at what prices they are being sold."

The cheek muscles of the elder were droopy and the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes were deep, but his body was well-built. He didn't find Klein's request weird because many customers weren't willing to let another person know what they wanted to buy before they confirmed that the seller had it available. Generally, they wished to be introduced to all options.

The old man flipped to the newest pages of the notebook, stole a glance at Klein, and took a sip of his honey wine before he said, "Water Ghost's brain tissue costs from three to fifteen pounds depending on how intact it is. Star Crystal, 150 pounds per 50 grams. 200 pounds for one Queen Bee Grass. 170 pounds for an adult black-spotted frog… 280 pounds for Human-faced Rose, but there's only one…"

Klein controlled his emotional response. After he listened to the old man's introduction, he was surprised that an underground trading place like this had fewer than thirty Beyonder ingredients.

As he touched the notes worth seven pounds in his pocket and thought of Miss Justice's attitude towards a thousand pounds, he sighed.

"Unfortunately, there is nothing I want."

Without waiting for the elder to pose any further questions, he quickly turned around to open the door and made an exit.

He returned to the underground market and looked around blankly. He stood there for a while and sighed with a bitter smile.

I'm probably the poorest boss among all the secret organizations… That only steeled his resolve of getting ingredients internally from the Nighthawks or through exchanges with Justice or The Hanged Man.

After circling the underground market twice, Klein picked and purchased ingredients to make charms, such as a partially-finished silver piece, herbal powders needed for rituals, and natural ores. He spent one pound and fifteen soli in total.

My private stash of money only has five pounds ten soli left. Excluding the final payment to the detective, I still have one pound ten soli… After Klein silently did the math regarding his financial situation, he felt helpless.

Of course, he knew very well that he had only been working for just over a month. If the time span had been extended to a year, he should have been able to save up more than a hundred pounds.

"In another two weeks, I'll have to tell Benson and Melissa that I've gotten a raise to three pounds. We can hire a maidservant, but I won't have a private stash of money anymore…" Klein thought as he walked towards the exit of the underground market.

Just then, he saw Old Neil in his classic black robe entering slowly.

"Got everything?" Old Neil greeted with a chuckle.

"Yes," Klein answered frankly.

Old Neil tsked immediately. "You came really early."

"That's because I'm still hungry, but you've already had your dinner." Klein chatted casually with Old Neil.

After a while, the boss of Evil Dragon Bar, Swain, walked in with his navy officer uniform draped over him. He approached the two of them with a mask of solemnity and lowered his voice.

"I need your help."

"What happened?" Old Neil suddenly turned serious, and Klein couldn't help but feel a tug at his heartstrings.

Swain's brown hair was messy, and there was a strong smell of alcohol in his breath. He replied in a low voice, "A member from the Mandated Punishers has lost control nearby. We have to finish him before he harms any commoners!"

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CHAPTER 129
RAMPAGER

Lost control? Klein's heart tightened as he nearly blurted out his question.

Even though Dunn and Old Neil had frequently emphasized the possibilities of losing control and the harm it caused, this was the first time he was experiencing an incident like that. He felt a little horrified, a little lost, a little scared, and a little saddened. He felt extremely mixed emotions.

"Among the cases that we… have to deal with annually, a quarter of them were a result of Beyonders who lost control… And among the quarter of cases, a large number of them are our teammates." Dunn's words flashed past Klein's mind, slowing his reaction.

Old Neil, who had experienced many incidents like this, immediately asked, "Where is the Rampager? What do you need us to do?"

Klein was taken aback from hearing this. He had believed that a sleazy, "half-retired personnel" like Old Neil would find an excuse to reject Swain's request or extort a huge sum in exchange for his help. Never did Klein expect Old Neil to participate without any hesitation, not minding the differences between Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers.

Klein suddenly understood something when he looked at the serious Old Neil. It didn't matter if they were Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind. Their aim was to stop supernatural powers from harming the innocent and maintain peace and stability in Tingen. If they were met with a dangerous and urgent situation, their sense of duty would propel them to help without hesitation!

Swain answered succinctly, "Be my support!"

He didn't explain why the person lost control or where the Rampager was. Instead, he made his way to the exit quickly.

This ex-captain of the Mandated Punishers was clearly an old alcoholic, but Klein realized that he could not keep up with the man's pace. He needed to break into a jog to ensure that he was not left behind.

He turned his head to look at Old Neil, only to see the old Mystery Pryer break into a run.

The three of them didn't pay any attention to the gazes of the guards on their way there. One of them had an old navy uniform draped over him, another was in a dark classic robe, and the other in a black windbreaker. They charged out of the billiard room and into Evil Dragon Bar.

The customers who were drinking shifted their gazes from the rat-baiting competition to Klein and company.

"Is that Boss Swain?"

"Where's he going in such a hurry?"

"Did someone default on their loan?"

…

Amidst the soft murmurs, some of the customers focused their attention back to the cage. They once again broke into an uproar, venting the stresses of their day. However, some of the more perceptive customers felt a faint sense of unease.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein, Old Neil, and Swain ran across the road and entered the harbor district.

"On that boat." Swain slowed down and pointed at a cargo ship not far away. "Two Mandated Punishers are circling the Rampager, preventing him from entering the Tussock River. Help me influence him and bring him under control. Leave the rest to me."

Old Neil panted for air and said, "Alright, b-but you have to give me a minute. Phew, a minute to recover."

Swain nodded and didn't say any more. He charged up to the ship and joined the fight.

Upon hearing the sounds of combat on the ship, Old Neil looked at the somewhat nervous Klein. He took out a piece of silver about the size of a baby's palm from a hidden pocket near his waist. He then passed the silver to Klein and said, "Slumber Charm. The incantation to activate this amulet is the phrase 'Evernight' in ancient Hermes. After you finish the incantation, inject your spirituality into the charm and then throw it at the target after three seconds."

"Alright!" Klein extended his hand to receive the charm and felt moved.

This charm was carved with Hermes incantations on both sides, as well as the corresponding symbols, Path Numbers, and the spell's characteristics. He didn't need to activate his Spirit Vision to feel the deep, serene power flowing within the charm.

Old Neil stood up straight and took out a similar charm from his hidden pocket and held it in his palm. He joked as he walked toward the cargo ship, "Do not be too nervous, relax and think about something else. For example, I lent you that charm. If you're going to use it, remember to make one for me in return. Of course, you can wait till next month, when you receive a new quota of materials before you do so."

This… He really is the experienced Old Neil… Klein placed the charm into his left pocket, reached into his holster, took out his revolver, and adjusted the hammer and drum.

"I don't feel that nervous anymore…" He had a gun in one hand and his cane in the other. He made his way up the steps with Old Neil and boarded the cargo ship.

This cargo ship had obvious signs of age. Although it was powered by steam and had a chimney, it retained its past fixtures such as its mast and sails. Furthermore, only its surface and some other portions were plated with metal; the remaining sections of the ship were still made of wood.

As the sounds of the battle intensified, Klein and Old Neil suddenly heard a loud noise amid the din while searching for a way to enter the cabin.

The wooden cabin was instantly shattered, its fragments flying everywhere. A figure fell through the hole and crashed onto the side of the ship.

Klein didn't have the luxury of time to evaluate the man's injuries. His gaze was focused on the monster which was charging towards the hole.

The monster was over 1.8 meters in height and was wearing a tattered shirt and trouser. Its ankles were covered with dark green scales, and a layer of skin had formed between its fingers and toes, as if they were the webbed limbs of an aquatic creature.

It had a head covered in wrinkles, still barely resembling a human. Its scales were coated with a sticky fluid that continuously dripped onto the floor.

Sizzle!

The sticky dark-green liquid corroded the deck slightly, leaving visible marks behind.

Bam! Swain punched the monster from the side, causing it to stagger two steps to the side.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Even with the ridiculous muscles Swain had, he was clearly inferior to the monster. Despite having his punches and kicks connect, they were unable to smash through its scales and cause physical harm. Swain was momentarily reduced to a wretched state as he staggered.

If not for Swain's astounding sense of balance and the efforts of the other Mandated Punishers to shoot and suppress the monster, Klein suspected that this blue-eyed elder would've been beaten to death by the monster.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Swain took multiple steps back, then advanced once again, like a moth to a flame.

But Klein could sense that he was accumulating something, waiting for something.

Bam!

Swain was sent to retreat, his body obscuring another Mandated Punisher's field of vision.

The monster took this chance to charge towards the opening.

It wanted to escape the ship and jump into the Tussock River!

Looking at the wrinkled, sticky head of the monster, Klein lifted his right hand and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The silver demon hunting bullet hit the monster's body just as he predicted. But it had only hit its scales and failed to fully penetrate its body.

The monster let out a ear-piercing shriek before it exerted strength with its feet and pounced at Klein.

When a stinking fishy smell hit him, Klein suddenly hunched down and rolled to the side.

Clang! He felt the ship shake as fragments had hit it as well.

At the same time, he heard an old but deep voice recite an incantation in ancient Hermes, "Evernight!"

Klein rolled over two more times. He couldn't care about his cane as he lifted his head and revolver in a fluster. All he saw was Old Neil tossing out his charm calmly, despite being incredibly close to the monster.

The piece of silver was instantly swallowed by a dark red flame and released the faint sound of an explosion.

A deep, serene power spread forth. The monster, who had almost destroyed the side of the ship, rocked. Its movements became sluggish.

Swain charged out from the cabin. He approached the creature and pulled back his arm, hitting the monster like a jackhammer. His punches connected with the head of the monster.

But he could barely inflict a wound, let alone cause any fatal damage. But Klein could sense that whatever the blue-eyed elder was accumulating had finally reached its peak.

Boom! The monster seemed to recover. It flailed its arm and made Swain take five steps back in retreat. Each of his steps caused cracks to form on the deck.

Seeing that the monster was about to turn around and jump off the cargo ship, Klein took out the Slumber Charm from his pocket in a hurry.

After which, he expertly recited the phrase in Ancient Hermes, "Evernight!"

Suddenly, Klein felt the silver charm in his hand turn ice-cold, as if it was made from snow.

He didn't think too much about it. He injected his spirituality into the charm, then pulled his arm back before throwing it forward, sending the charm flying towards the monster.

Meanwhile, the fish-and-human monster had jumped into the air.

The dark red flames illuminated the surrounding darkness and the faint explosion was like a prelude to a slumber as it quickly radiated outwards.

Bam!

The monster fell onto the dock, squirming into a ball. It was temporarily in a half-asleep state.

Klein was just about to rush to the side of the boat and shoot at the monster's head when he suddenly saw Swain charge out and jump over, his navy uniform already long gone.

He changed his posture in the air, his muscles tightening.

Using his spiritual perception, Klein could feel something that had been suppressed erupt. Swain descended from the sky and slammed into the body of the monster. He then straightened his back and landed a heavy fist on the head of the monster.

Crack!

The monster's skull shattered into pieces. Dark red blood and grayish brain matter laced with the green sticky liquid splattered all over the ground.

"This is one of the abilities of a Folk of Rage?" Klein muttered to himself as he stood near the broken side of the ship.

Old Neil held his left arm and leaned over to look at what had happened below.

At that moment, Swain was standing straight. He stared at the monster under his feet that had just lost its life.

He took out a metal flask and opened the lid. He drank a good half of the liquor before tilting the flask, pouring the remaining liquor onto the monster.

After finishing this, Swain looked like he had aged considerably, his back hunching a little.

Old Neil sighed as he looked at the scene below. He whispered to Klein, "I know this Mandated Punisher who lost control. He had followed Swain for almost thirty years, once clearing water ghosts who had been killing people on the shore. He also captured evil Beyonders who were trying to escape through the Tussock River…"

He didn't continue, but Klein understood what he wanted to say: A guard who had made many contributions and killed countless monsters ended up becoming a monster himself.

This was not an isolated incident. It was a possible outcome that many members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind would one day face.

Hi, CKtalon here, the translator of LoM. I've included the author's notes before the book went Premium in China below.

It has been two months since LoM was first released, and it's time to go Premium.

In the past two months, I nearly didn't say much in the Author's Notes or interact much with you. The main reason is that I'm increasingly convinced that the best communication between author and reader is inside the novel. I will write whatever I wish to express or describe inside the story, so there's no need for me to say anything else.

Yes, back to LoM, I probably had this idea to find the joy from first coming into contact with web novels. That feeling of "wow, there can be such a world" or "there's actually such a magical world."

Back then, every book presented a variety of different and interesting worlds. It always exposed me to more, making me unable to extricate myself from those worlds as they expand my imagination. Of course, it has to do with me having little exposure to similar novels.

Therefore, when I felt that I had made sufficient preparations in creating the framework of a relatively new world and an interesting and amazing system, I began this book with uneasiness and courage.

With "acting" the 22 Pathways as core, with 220 potions and 220 "jobs," this is a part that I hope the most that can interest everyone. In addition, it mixes in Cthulu mythos, SCP Foundation elements, and the vibes of the first Industrial Revolution's era and a steampunk world.

I read many books and created many settings, but I know that what's most important is to carefully tell this story. I took my time to tell it, which is why the first volume's pace is extremely slow. It's also why chapters consisting of more than 410,000+ Chinese characters (255,000+ English words) were released free. I wanted to honestly develop the plot and accentuate the characters to portray the world. I didn't seek so-called climaxes and presented the scenes in my heart to you.

Thanks to MAM's writing, I was able to have standards that can attract others when writing slice of life parts, allowing me to be equipped with the ability and writing flair needed to honestly tell a story.

In the past, I learned how to express, or it could be said that every writer or author can innately express. But now, I feel that I've begun restraining myself. Many a time, I would not describe it, but use actions, speech and expressions to present the emotions, without any inner monologue. I might not even use actions, speech, and expression, just describing it coldly, like the chapter with the female lead workers. It's also my wish to maintain standards at critical points in LoM.

This book's various frameworks are probably the most complete one among all my books. Look forward to how I handle everything.

This is my thoughts and attempts for this book. I hope everyone will like it. I wish you can support me by paying for Premium chapters; after all, I still need to make a livelihood. I still need to meet the demands of my wife…

I've always been a normal person, and I've never had any doubts to that. At the same time, I'm also a person who's very lazy and have many personality problems.

I once thought of organizing my own fan club like other authors, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there was no more 'thens.'

I once thought of having a Weibo [1] to amass some popularity, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there was no more 'thens.' I've already lost track of the last time I updated on Weibo.

I made a public WeChat account and attempted writing somethings, but, aiyah, it's really frustrating and tiring. Then, there are updates only once in a while.

I attempted to hire others to help me run the social media account, but I always find it awkward and embarrassing seeing the content posted by others. So, I stopped it.

Phew, I wish to be a mediator for myself. Admit it, you are a lazy person. You are a person who is flawed when it comes to social interactions. You are a thin skinned person who wants face at the cost of your life. You are a person who doesn't like getting disturbed by various miscellaneous matters. You are just like it is to wash a pig is to waste both water and soap.

Perhaps, what I can do well and am willing to do well is to write novels, the depiction of the story in my heart.

That is how I reconcile with myself, not to live on awkwardly or force myself to become popular. For the public account, I'll post something when I think of it. If there's nothing, forget it. Well, reconciliation is just an artistic way of saying convincing. The accurate description should be to live in self-abandonment. *Rubs hands nefariously.*

After this communication, we will have Premium chapters for the next update. I'll make my plea here for you to support Premium and vote with your Power Stones. There will be a mass release! Really, I have a stockpile!

Well, there will at least be 5, maybe 6!

Volume 1 End

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CHAPTER 130
BACKLUND'S SECRET GATHERING

Volume 2 start

Klein looked at Swain standing before the monster's corpse before looking sideways towards the Mandated Punisher who was helping his semi-conscious partner up by the arm. Klein suddenly felt an indescribable sadness.

It was almost impossible for members of the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind to be known as heroes. The things they did were never made known to the public but only hidden in confidential dockets. But the danger and pain they endured were ever so real.

Perhaps there would be a day when my enemy will be one of my teammates… Klein sighed silently. He felt the heavy weight that all Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind carried.

At that moment, Old Neil let out a sigh.

"Let's go. Let's not disturb them."

"Okay." Klein picked up his cane. Just as he widened his stride, he suddenly noticed that Old Neil was still holding his left hand. He asked, concerned, "Are you hurt?"

Old Neil chuckled briefly before saying, "I got stabbed by one of the shrapnel earlier. If I was still young, I definitely would've been able to dodge it. Luckily, it's just a small cut."

He moved his right hand slightly to let Klein see the tiny wound that was still lightly bleeding on the back of his left hand.

After he confirmed that it wasn't a big issue, Klein walked off along the gangway as he sighed.

"Mr. Neil, you're much calmer than I imagined. Despite being less than two meters away from the monster, you could still chant the incantation calmly and use the charm."

Although the rampaging Mandated Punisher had leaped towards Klein in the form of a monster, Old Neil was physically very close to him the entire time.

Old Neil chucked at the compliment.

"I'm an experienced Nighthawk. Among the dangerous things that I've done, what happened just now isn't even in my top ten. Once, when I was patrolling Raphael Cemetery with Dunn, I had no idea that a corpse had turned into a zombie and left its tomb to lie in ambush in the shadows of the trees. I passed by without noticing it at all since I was looking for some hidden spot. Heh, you know what I mean. In the end, he leapt onto my back and seized my throat."

Klein felt gripped by terror when he heard the recollection as he voiced out his guess.

"And under such a situation, you were still calm enough to use a charm? Or did you use some spell that a Mystery Pryer could cast quickly?"

Old Neil stole a glance at him and chortled. "No, Dunn managed to drag that zombie into a slumber in time. I'm telling you this story to tell you that,

as a Nighthawk, you not only have to believe in yourself, you also have to trust your teammates too."

Klein fell silent for a few seconds. Then, he replied both sincerely and jokingly, "Mr. Neil, you are so wise today."

Old Neil did a tiny hop and found his footing on the pier. He replied in disdain, "That's because you only get to know the most trivial side of me usually."

The two of them left the harbor and walked towards Evil Dragon Bar.

Klein put away his revolver, set his cane aside, and took off his jacket. Under the light of the gas street lamp, he started checking if there was any damage to his jacket.

"How lucky. There are only a few splinters and a patch that got dirtied…" He removed the splinters and roughly patted the dust away. Then, he put it back on.

Old Neil looked at him with a smile and mimicked his tone by adding leisurely. "What a pity, there's no way to claim compensation."

Klein was temporarily at a loss for words.

I'm not such a person! He emphasized in his heart.

As the public carriage arrived, Klein took out his silver vine-leaf pocket watch and flipped it open to check the time.

"If there's nothing else, I have to head home," he turned to tell Old Neil.

Old Neil nodded slightly and said, "Enjoy your dinner at home. You don't need to think about the Slumber Charm. I'll get Swain to compensate me. He's a rich man after all. Of course, I won't go today. I have to consider his mood."

Klein opened his mouth, but in the end, he only said, "… Thank you for your generosity."

He boarded the carriage quickly and returned to Daffodil Street. It was already past seven in the evening, and the sky had already grown dark.

Klein took out his keys to open the door and saw Melissa taking off her fishnet hat and setting it on the clothes rack. He smiled and did small talk.

"You just got back?"

Then, his mixed emotions suddenly vanished, and he felt relaxed and warm.

"There was a practical lesson in school today," Melissa explained seriously.

Klein sniffed and smelled the fragrance of food. He was stunned and asked subconsciously, "Then, who's cooking dinner?"

The moment he finished his sentence, both of them answered the question in unison, "Benson!"

Their tone had a hint of alarm.

Benson, who had heard their conversation, walked out of the kitchen. While wiping his hands on an apron, he said, "Do you have no confidence in my cooking? I remember that before Melissa learned how to cook, you two would wait for me to come home and watch me cook with anticipation. Actually, cooking is so easy. You want potato beef stew? Put in the beef first, then the potatoes, then add some seasoning…"

Klein and Melissa exchanged glances and remained silent.

Putting aside his cane and took off his hat, Klein turned around and smiled.

"I think it's time to hire a maidservant. It's very unhealthy to not eat dinner on time."

"But I don't want to have a stranger next to us when we chat. That'll make me feel uncomfortable," Melissa said, subconsciously finding an excuse to object.

Klein spoke with a smile as he took off his jacket.

"I don't mind…"

Just then, his expression froze, and he stopped what he was doing.

I almost took off my jacket. I still have a revolver at my armpit…

*Ahem. *He cleared his throat and pretended nothing happened. "Don't mind her. When we get home, we can let the maidservant rest in her room. I doubt any maidservant would dislike resting. Hmm, we must find a maidservant who's willing to learn how to cook."

He didn't want to endure the torture of a cuisine that left him guessing in the future.

Benson stood at the kitchen and nodded in agreement.

"When we have time, we can go over to Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association. They have a great deal of experience and many resources in this field."

"Alright, it's decided then!" Klein ignored Melissa's unwilling look.

…

Backlund, Empress Borough, Viscount Glaint's residence.

Audrey Hall left the party with her personal maid, Annie. They came to the second floor and entered the bedroom that the Viscount had prepared.

She took off her glamorous dress and her lightweight dancing heels slowly with Annie's assistance. She then put on a black hooded robe that she had prepared ahead of time.

Pulling up the hood, Audrey stood before the full mirror and examined herself.

She saw that more than half her face was covered by the shadow of her hood, and only her beautiful lips were clearly exposed.

*Long black robe, face hidden by shadows, a mysterious feeling… This is something I've been dreaming of wearing all this time! *Audrey thought to herself happily.

Worried, she added a blue boat-shaped soft hat under her hood. With the fine checkered fishnet drooping down, her facial features became even more indiscernible.

"Not bad, that's it!" Audrey stuffed her feet into leather ankle boots, looked to the side, and told Annie, "Wait for me here. No matter who comes, do not open the door."

Annie looked at her helplessly and said, "But you have to make sure that your trip doesn't take more than an hour."

"You should trust me. I have kept my promise every single time in the past." Audrey smiled and leaned in towards her personal maidservant. She hugged her and kissed her cheek as etiquette demanded.

Then, she walked quickly and pulled up her hood. Turning around, she exited the bedroom through a secret door.

She walked all the way down and came to the side door of the viscount's residence where she saw that there was already a carriage waiting there.

Glaint stood amidst the shadows as he glanced at Audrey and complimented sincerely, "By dressing up like this, you are really, yeah—like the description Emperor Roselle often used—very cool."

"Thank you." Audrey pulled up an imaginary skirt and curtsied elegantly.

The two of them got into the carriage and left the villa. They arrived at a house about ten minutes away.

Outside the house, Audrey saw Apprentice Fors Wall and her friend, Tribunal Xio Derecha, whom she had been seeing recently.

Fors's slightly wavy brown hair and her light blue eyes showed a natural laziness. She pointed at Xio Derecha next to her and said, "She's an excellent persuader, capable of helping you get things that you want."

Xio Derecha was slightly shorter, about 150 cm at most. Her facial features were soft, but she seemed pretty young and immature.

Although her shoulder length blond hair was messy and unkempt, and she was in a traditional knight training suit, she carried an indescribable look of dignity and a convincing charm.

Audrey had met her a few times. She smiled faintly and greeted, "Miss Xio, can I trust you?"

"You don't have to worry at all." Xio Derecha smiled and gestured with her hand.

Just as she walked to follow Audrey and Viscount Glaint, they heard a sudden thud.

Audrey looked towards the source of the sound and saw that a triangular blade coruscating with a cold glimmer had fallen beside Xio Derecha's leg.

Audrey and Xio Derecha exchanged looks, simultaneously at a loss for words.

After nearly twenty seconds, Xio Derecha quickly squatted and picked up the triangular blade and hid it on her body.

"We have to prevent the occurrence of an accident. Some people lack rationality, and they aren't convinced easily," Xio Derecha explained seriously.

Audrey nodded and replied with a clear voice, "I believe you…"

"These are tools to convince those b*stards to talk to us calmly," Fors added, looking sideways at the grass plains.

The quartet didn't continue conversing and walked a few steps forward. They knocked on the wooden door with three long and two short knocks.

The door squeaked and opened. Slowly, using her Spectator state, Audrey looked into the house that had many people sitting around randomly. They employed various methods such as hoods or masks to conceal their looks. Some didn't even bother and exposed their faces openly.

Almost instantly, Audrey noticed a black-robed man on a single seat sofa.

That man wore a hood too, hiding his looks under a shadow.

He looked at all the guests in silence, giving people a feeling that he was somehow in a commanding position.

*He is very confident, but his gaze is very disgusting. His gaze moved up and down my body like two slippery tentacles wanting to tear off my clothes… *Audrey's senses were sharp. She carefully observed and made a judgment calmly, but she nearly had goosebumps.

Fors introduced him.

"That's Mr. A, a powerful Beyonder, the leader of this secret gathering."

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CHAPTER 131
TRANSACTION

*Mr. A? That sounds more like a code name for a criminal rather than a powerful man of mystery. It can't be compared to The Fool at all… No, only gods or demigods can be compared to Mr. Fool… *Audrey felt a sense of superiority as she thought about this.

She looked calmly at Mr. A and spoke to Fors and Xio Derecha with a hushed tone, "Are there any stories about this man?"

The hooded Viscount Glaint was equally curious.

Xio Derecha replied sternly, "There were several such incidents in the past. Sequence 8 Beyonders, some even at Sequence 7, have targeted and tried to deal with Mr. A, but they've all mysteriously disappeared."

"So he truly is a powerful Beyonder," Glaint marveled.

They walked into the room as they spoke. The guards immediately closed the door behind them.

After adjusting to the gas lamp's light in the room, Audrey saw two blackboards with several phrases written across them right in front of her.

At that moment, Fors, who had an unlit cigarette in her hand, whispered, "Those are the requests of the members of this gathering. You should be able to understand that many people do not wish for others to know what they possess to avoid being a target of greedy people. Thus, they write their requests, or what they are selling, as well as the rough price on the blackboards anonymously."

Audrey nodded. She didn't care to observe the members of the meeting; instead, she shifted her gaze to the words on the left board.

"I need a pair of eyes from a mature Manhal Fish."

"The dust left behind by vengeful spirits, 165 pounds."

"Three pages from Emperor Roselle's notebook, 20 pounds."

Audrey couldn't maintain the state of her Spectator when she saw that. She was as shocked as she was excited.

These prices… these prices are too… too cheap! She thought in excitement and joy.

As she walked, her gaze shifted as she saw other notices.

"Tears of an Infant flower, 200 pounds."

"Mummy Powder, 10 grams, 5 pounds."

"Fishman Secretion, 30 ml, 29 pounds."

"Formula for Sequence 8 potion Sheriff, 450 pounds."

…

Too… just too cheap! The Beyonder ingredients all cost less than 300 pounds! Audrey's eyes sparkled as she found a place to sit together with her companions.

Xio Derecha leaned over and whispered into her ear, "Do you have anything you want?"

Audrey breathed heavily. Emperor Roselle's famous quote flashed through her mind: "I want it all!"

She had two elder brothers, rendering her eligibility to inherit the aristocratic title and the main portion of the inheritance null. But as a lady adored by her parents and brothers, she had property, farmland, pastures, mines, jewelry, stocks, and bonds to her name. Together, they were valued at 300,000 pounds.

This was a part of her inheritance, but she only possessed them in name before her father, Count Hall, passed away, or when she got married. Every year, she received a corresponding amount from a trust fund.

But even so, she could receive 15,000 to 25,000 pounds a year, making her one of the richest women among the nobles in the entire Loen Kingdom.

Of course, she had expenses she couldn't avoid as a noble. And now that she was receiving annual payouts, she could no longer pester her parents for money all the time.

She controlled herself and answered with reservation, "For the time being, I have my sights on Emperor Roselle's notebook. I adore him, and I think that the special symbols and literature he created hold a mysterious power; it's just that we haven't found the correct way to decipher them."

Audrey, you are becoming more and more hypocritical… She added in her heart.

Just as she had said that, a young man in a white shirt sitting near them stood up excitedly. He agreed with Audrey, "Yes! That's true! I've finally met someone who shares the same opinion as me!

"I'm the person with the three pages of the notebook, and I can sell them to you right now!"

Audrey was at a loss at first before she replied with a smile, "Then please allow me to express my gratitude."

She took out a pair of 10-pound notes and handed them over to the man, then received the three pages of Emperor Roselle's diary in exchange. Of course, no one here knew that they were part of his diary, and thus everyone generally called them his notebook.

Audrey flipped through the pages after she received them and confirmed that the writing was similar to the previous pages that she had come across.

She put away the diary and asked Xio and Fors softly, "Who can I look for if the notes are fake? Mr. A?"

"Yes, Mr. A will not allow any fraud to take place in his gathering. And I could help you mediate this privately too," Xio Derecha replied eagerly.

"I understand." Audrey entered her Spectator state and surveyed the Beyonders and Beyonders-to-be around her.

There were many people looking over because of the excitement of the young man just now. They were observing Audrey and Glaint, some making it obvious while others were more discreet, but Audrey and Glaint's hoods covered their features well.

There are sofas and chairs strewn all around the venue, all facing the board. The material of the furniture is rather normal, indicating that the person who gathered them here, Mr. A, isn't a noble and doesn't care much about the venue… Yes, with the confidence he displayed, he need not be overly pretentious with the venue… Audrey looked around and calmly observed.

Mr. A looks at all the ladies present, his gaze often lingering on those who have above-average looks… He's lecherous… Why is he looking at me so frequently? Can he see through my robe?

Audrey was shocked at this deduction. She felt disgusted, as if she had just eaten a fly.

But her worries quickly eased, for she noticed that Mr. A was not looking at her body or the bodies of the other ladies…

*This means that his eyes cannot see through fabric directly. His sense of sight is exceptional. It's as if he's observing me at a close distance. With that ability, the hood won't achieve much. *Audrey calmly observed the rest of the people engaging in their own deals and got an understanding of the circumstances of some of the people there.

At that moment, Mr. A's facilitator walked over and whispered to Audrey's group, "You can write your requests on a piece of paper and pass them to me, or wait till the break later to write whatever you want to sell on the blackboard in the small room."

Fors took a whiff of her cigarette and surveyed the surroundings cautiously. "Have you considered which Sequence 9 formula you want?"

She had kept her promise and told Audrey and Viscount Glaint about all the Sequence pathways she knew of.

Audrey pretended to think before saying, "Spectator, I want to become a Spectator. And, I also want the advancement of Spectator, the Telepathist."

She considered the fact that she would have to come into frequent contact with Fors and Xio Derecha in the future, making it highly possible that they would realize that she was a Beyonder, a Spectator. Thus, she decided to take this opportunity to reveal this to them and completely conceal the fact that the Tarot Club existed.

Even though I'll be wasting some money, it'll still be worth it… Audrey praised herself.

At the same time, she noticed that Xio Derecha was looking at the blackboards from time to time, her expression was that of desire and depression.

Xio told me that the corresponding Sequence 8 to Arbiter was Sheriff. She's looking at the 450-pound price tag? Well, it's obvious that she wants the formula for Sheriff…

She's already been an Arbiter for more than a year, and she has been unknowingly acting the role of an Arbiter. Her potion should have been digested already…

All these details tell me that Xio lacks money!

As Audrey was deducing all of this, Viscount Glaint revealed his choice.

"Apothecary, I want the formula for Sequence 9 Apothecary!"

Feeling the gazes from Audrey, Fors, and Xio, he explained himself with a chortle, "To me, health and not having to worry about major illnesses and harm is the most important thing!"

"A rational decision. I once dreamed of becoming an Apothecary." Fors sighed while smiling.

She had a rather languid demeanor.

After making the decision, Audrey and the rest wrote their requests on pieces of paper and handed them over to the facilitator. They looked on as the facilitator made his way around the venue and asked the other participants, collecting several other slips of paper.

This facilitator then shuffled the notes and handed them over to his partner in charge of the blackboards, asking him to transcribe the information onto them.

"I need the formulas for potions Spectator and Telepathist, the price will be negotiated face-to-face…"

The facilitator would repeat the request three times after he wrote it onto the blackboard. If someone was interested, they could apply for a room in secret. There would be facilitators helping them complete the deal.

After waiting for a while, Audrey and Glaint didn't receive a request for a deal. They were rather disappointed.

At this moment, a facilitator walked over to Audrey's side and handed her a folded piece of paper.

"It's from Mr. A," the facilitator said softly.

Audrey unfolded the slip of paper and took a look.

"Are you interested in the formulas of other Sequence 9 potions?"

Audrey curled the ends of her mouth disdainfully and wrote on a blank spot: "I am only interested in Spectator."

She folded the piece of paper and handed it back to the facilitator, then watched as he passed it back to Mr. A.

Mr. A took a glance and didn't say anything, continuing to look over the rest of the members silently.

But Audrey sharply noticed that he had secretly burned the piece of paper and allowed the ashes to fall to the floor.

Fifteen minutes later, Mr. A said, "Now we will have a break. You can interact with other participants freely."

At this moment, the young man who sold Emperor Roselle's diary approached Audrey and said in excitement, "I have already deciphered a portion of the Emperor Roselle's special characters and tattooed them onto myself, allowing me to gain some remarkable abilities.

"Are you interested?"

Audrey suddenly recalled that she had asked Mr. Fool if the special characters in the Emperor Roselle's diary possessed any unique abilities. Mr. Fool's answer was that they were useless unless a deity suddenly took interest in them.

She looked at the young man in front of her and thought for a moment. She then probed, "What remarkable abilities?"

The young man answered excitedly, "I have become stronger and more healthy!"

Audrey looked at him in pity. "I'm sorry, I have more trust in my own research."

In the remaining time, she continued observing those who came to this gathering, but didn't obtain any more information. All she had was a rough deduction that some of them were doctors or lawyers, ordinary occupations.

Audrey and the rest left the venue after another half an hour and returned to Viscount Glaint's mansion as they waited till the ball ended.

Audrey returned home at about 10 that night. She was about to get her maidservant to prepare some hot water when she saw her dog Susie shoot her a look.

My dog just shot me a look… Audrey's emotions became complicated.

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CHAPTER 132
MEETING THE MONSTER AGAIN

She found an excuse for her maidservant to leave them alone temporarily. Audrey locked the door and looked back at her golden retriever, Susie, who she wasn't sure could still be considered as her pet.

"You heard… Uh, or came across something?"

Susie sat steadily and howled, reverberating the air around her.

"Yes, I heard the Count's discussion with a few Members of Parliament in the study. They said that the King and the Prime Minister came to a mutual agreement; they will give up their revenge plan on the Feysac Empire in Balam's East Coast for the time being. Where's Balam's East Coast?"

Susie's terrifying speed at grasping Loen made Audrey feel mixed emotions. She fell silent for a few seconds before she said, "I'll give you a map tomorrow…"

"Okay~" Susie replied in delight. "The King and the Prime Minister believe that presently the most pertinent task is to push for the reformation, which will allow civil servants to be selected via examination. They hope to pass the bill through the House of Lords and the House of Commons before October."

"Really?" Audrey asked, pleasantly surprised.

That was the first matter that she had managed to secretly guide after she became a Spectator. Turning it into reality would give her a sense of achievement!

Susie answered frankly, "I can't give you a definite answer. This is just what I've heard, I couldn't even fully understand what they meant. After all, I'm a dog that just started to learn."

Audrey was stunned for a moment before she beamed and said, "Susie, you did well! This is your reward!"

She took out a bag from a lavish cabinet, tore open the seal, and placed it before Susie.

It was a dog biscuit produced by the Backlund Pet Care Company which was made of flour, vegetables, meat, and water. It was a snack that Susie really liked.

Susie sat straight and sniffed. She waved her paw, seemingly deciding how she was to consume it to suit her present identity the best.

After a few seconds, she gave up thinking, adhered to her instinct, and leaped forward. She grabbed the bag of snacks and ran outside.

She stood on her hind legs and opened the door with one claw. Then ran out and hid in the shadows and began enjoying her snack.

…

On Sunday, Klein didn't wake up until the afternoon, because he had spent the night on duty at Chanis Gate. Klein took the trackless public carriage and arrived at Evil Dragon Bar.

He had previously planned to use divination to find Monster Ademisaul and determine the reason for his recent oddity. However, he was interrupted by

the loss of control of a Mandated Punisher and could only reschedule it to today.

He went through the billiard room and entered the underground market. Klein didn't need to search for he immediately saw Ademisaul shivering in a corner.

When the pale-looking young man with black, messy, oily hair sensed Klein's approach, he suddenly covered his eyes and leaned against the wall in an attempt to move towards the side door.

Klein quickened his pace and blocked Ademisaul from leaving. He tapped the left molars twice secretly.

In his Spirit Vision, Ademisaul's aura appeared rather unhealthy. All the colors seemed dim. In other words, although he didn't have any major diseases, his body was very weak.

At the same time, Klein realized that vibrant fear and anxiety were revealed in the monster's emotions. He had lost almost all of the blue that represented rational thinking.

The surface of his Astral Projection extended from the depths of his Ether Body. The color was a unified, transparent, and colorless, just like a pure light. Is this the uniqueness of a naturally-born "Monster"? Klein nodded indiscernibly as he stared at Ademisaul's face and said, "What did you see recently? What did you come across? Why are you hiding in a corner and quivering while saying that there are all corpses and that everyone is dead?"

Ademisaul lowered his head and looked towards his toes. It seemed like he didn't dare to look directly at the person before him.

He was shivering almost violently in his grayish-blue trousers and ragged linen shirt. He replied in a fluster, "No, I didn't see anything. N-no, I only had a dream. There's blood everywhere in the dream and corpses scattered

everywhere. Haha! Boohoo! I was among the corpses! I was there! I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die! I don't want to die, I don't want to die!"

He laughed and he cried. His reply confused Klein.

Klein massaged his temples and lowered his voice to ask again, "Why are you afraid of me?"

Ademisaul was taken aback for a few seconds when he suddenly squatted down. He yelled in extreme fear, "No!

"No!"

…

Everyone looked over and Klein suddenly felt awkward.

I didn't do anything to you… Why are you screaming as though something happened! He laughed dryly. He saw that Ademisaul had curled up in a trembling fetal position. Besides begging for mercy, he didn't say anything else. Klein had no choice but to distance himself and pretend that he was just passing by.

Hmm, maybe I should ask Mr. Azik for advice. But he just went on vacation to the northern part of the Feysac Empire last week, and he'll only return next Thursday or Friday. Before that, I have to first report to Captain… Klein covered his mouth as he yawned. He turned and left the underground market.

After he got his salary that week, his private stash returned to eight pounds ten soli. However, truly rare Beyonder ingredients were so expensive that he could only window shop. Of course, if he wasn't afraid of the high interest, he could get a short-term loan from Swain.

When he exited Evil Dragon Bar and waited for the public carriage, Klein considered the future developments.

In another week, the twelve pounds from my advance salary at the beginning will be cleared. The money that I bring home will finally reach three pounds a week. Melissa will have no excuse about delaying the hiring of a maidservant… The other three pounds will remain a secret, and I'll save up more money for myself…

And I have to quickly get the Telepathist formula or related clues from Daxter Guderian. I can use the excuse of giving an underling funds to exchange it for cash from Miss Justice… This could be done through an anonymous bank transfer. During the process, I'll cause interference via divination. That will be very safe and it won't reveal my identity…

…

After getting on a public carriage, Klein didn't head to the Blackthorn Security Company directly but planned on heading to the Divination Club for two hours.

It was part of the work needed to foreshadow his digestion of the potion.

Plus, Klein was now considered famous in the divination industry. There were returning customers from the past and there were also referrals. On average, he would have more than ten divinations in an afternoon.

Hence, even though he only went twice a week, he could still make a profit of half a pound. To the impoverished Mr. Fool, it was better than nothing.

*Sigh, it's a pity that I made it sound too good at the beginning and fostered too perfect of an image. I can't just change my divination fees as I wish… *While sitting in the meeting room at the Divination Club, Klein thought to himself helplessly as he drank his Sibe black tea.

With his present fame, people would still seek his services even if he charged four soli.

However, as a Seer that respected fate, he could only continue to charge eight pence.

Although Klein had fully digested the potion, he wasn't willing to take the risk of going against the Seer principles that he previously summarized. That included not obtaining excessive benefits from divination. After all, he didn't know if it would lead to losing control or other negative effects.

The confidential information the Nighthawks had didn't include the concept of "digesting." Thus, Klein couldn't determine if there was still risks after fully digesting the potion, or if he could do anything that was against the principle.

Just as he was thinking about these things, the beautiful attendant named Angelica came in and walked over to him. She leaned down and softly said, "Mr. Moretti, someone wishes for your divination. Red Agate room."

"Alright." Klein had checked if it was a suitable day to visit the Divination Club before he came, and he had obtained a definite answer from his divination.

He took his silk top hat, exited the meeting room, and saw his customer that was waiting at the door of the Red Agate Room.

The customer was a maiden around sixteen years old. She was wearing a light blue ruffled dress and holding a gauze hat of the same color. She had brown curly hair, a cute face with baby fat, and a pair of beautiful light blue eyes.

"Elizabeth?" Klein recognized his sister's good friend, Elizabeth, who studied at the Ivos Public School.

He had once helped pick an amulet for her and also resolved Selena's magic mirror divination incident with her assistance.

Similarly, Elizabeth said in pleasant surprise, "Mr. Moretti, it's really you? I was wondering if it was you when I saw the name."

"I am a mysticism enthusiast after all," Klein explained helplessly. Then he added, "Don't tell Melissa. Oh, Selena as well."

The divination result showed that it was suitable for me to visit the Divination Club! Why did I run into Elizabeth? He shook his head as he turned around to open the door to the Red Agate room.

At the same time, he clicked his left molar twice.

They entered the room slowly. After he took the seat of the diviner, he lifted his head to look towards Elizabeth.

With just one glance, his creased his eyebrows.

There was a faint layer of gloomy green in the maiden's energy field!

A symptom of being haunted by spirits and wraiths… Klein made a calm judgment and asked directly, "Have you had nightmares recently, ones with repetitive elements?"

Elizabeth, who had just locked the door and had yet to take a seat, was dumbstruck. It took her a long time to reply, "Yes… That's why I came here to look for you."

Klein leaned back and asked, "What kind of dream did you have? When did it start?"

"It began from the last two days of my vacation to Lamud Town. Oh, our family has an estate there." Elizabeth was considered half a mysticism enthusiast, so she had better memories of such situations. "In my dream, I always run into a knight in full black armor. He carries a huge broadsword and his face is fully covered by a helmet, so all I could see is a pair of

glowing red eyes. In the dream, he keeps attempting to get closer to me. Afraid, I run away, but the distance shortens each and every time…"

Klein thought and asked, "Two or three days before you had such a dream, did you get in touch with any antiques, ancient ruins, burial objects, or a mausoleum?"

Elizabeth recalled and answered, "I-I visited a mountain near Lamud Town. There was an abandoned ancient castle."

That's a standard opening of a paranormal novel… Klein lampooned silently as he pressed on, "Did you leave anything behind in the castle? Or did you take anything from the castle?"

Elizabeth creased her beautiful eyebrows and answered moments later in uncertainty, "I got cut by brambles and bled… Does leaving blood behind count?"

Klein nodded with a mask of solemnity and answered in a deep voice, "Yes."

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CHAPTER 133
EXPENSIVE CHARMS

Elizabeth immediately turned nervous after hearing Klein's reply. Subconsciously, she began to speak faster.

"Can you help me divine the specific reason? It will be even better if you can divine a way to solve this…"

*Divination can only give us a general direction of how to solve the problem, and furthermore, it will be unclear and filled with symbolism, making it difficult to decipher the hints correctly… Of course, you're very lucky, I'm not an ordinary Seer, I'm a true mysticism scholar! *Klein lampooned the girl's question before saying solemnly, "Since this matter has to do with dreams, I would suggest a similar divination method."

"Alright, alright." Elizabeth nodded her head like a hungry woodpecker.

Klein maintained his professional attitude. "I will need you to sleep here and allow that dream to present itself. Is that a problem?"

"There's no problem, I trust you," Elizabeth answered without hesitation while pursing her lips.

But she quickly added with a stammer, "B-but, I cannot guarantee that I would… I would have that dream."

"It's just an attempt," Klein consoled her with a gentle smile.

He then pointed at the long sofa on the side of the Red Agate room. "Please."

"No, no need for that, I'll sleep here." Elizabeth shook her head gently. She crossed her arms and said, "I sleep like this at school after classes whenever I feel tired."

She used her arms as a pillow and leaned forward onto the edge of the table.

"Alright, you can pretend that I'm not here." Klein smiled as he observed the colors of her aura and emotions. He used them to deduce if the girl had fallen asleep or not.

"Okay." Elizabeth closed her eyes and buried her face into her arms, trying hard to ease her breathing.

Klein didn't speak as he leaned back into his chair. The room suddenly became unusually quiet.

It was a peaceful silence, a silence that could make one forget their troubles.

Sometime later, Klein took out a semicircular piece of silver from his pocket after he confirmed that Elizabeth had fallen asleep. The piece of silver was filled with indecipherable Hermes phrases as well as symbolic imagery and numbers.

It was a Dream Charm that Klein had succeeded in making the previous morning!

He had also finished making two Slumber Charms and two Requiem Charms. The former were made with rectangular pieces of silver while the latter were made with triangular pieces. This was to help him differentiate between them solely by touch during an intense battle.

"Crimson!" Klein softly recited the phrase in ancient Hermes.

This was the activation incantation that he had set. Since there was still the step of injecting spirituality into the charm, there was no need for his

incantation to be different from the rest. All it needed was to be short and easy to remember.

The mysterious incantation reverberated around the room. Klein felt the Dream Charm become light in his hand, as if it had temporarily lost its weight.

Klein immediately placed the charm on the table in front of him after he injected it with his spirituality.

A transparent flame leapt up silently, enveloping the charm and became a deep, serene black.

The black flames spread quickly, enveloping Elizabeth and Klein.

Klein seized the opportunity to enter his state of Cogitation. He used his spirituality to look at the illusory spherical light in front of him.

The spherical light was surrounded by a boundless darkness, making it seem exceptionally lonely.

Klein didn't dare delay any further as he emitted his spirituality, allowing it to touch the illusory ball of light.

Silently, the scene around him started to coruscate and warp, but it quickly settled into a yellowish-brown plain. The plain was littered with the corpses of horses and humans. Fresh blood and weapons could be seen everywhere.

Elizabeth was wearing a regal gown with engageantes and a fishnet hat. She was looking around, lost.

She quickly saw Klein's figure and revealed a look of surprise and joy.

"Mr. Moretti, we meet again! I had suspected that the Klein Moretti on the name register was you when Selena and I came to get a divination. I came

again multiple times, but always missed you as I had to attend lessons during the day…

"When I was free during the summer break, I was dragged to a holiday at Lamud Town by my parents…

"You can help me right?"

Klein froze for a moment when he heard the girl's talkativeness.

To think that Elizabeth had suspected that I was working part-time at the Divination Club and tried to find me on multiple occasions…

Yet, she didn't appear abnormal at all!

Hmm, her surprise was authentic, masking her true thoughts…

Indeed, everyone's dream shows their most honest side, other than me, Mr. Fool.

As he was indulging in his thoughts, Elizabeth's dream changed. A tall knight, about 1.9 meters in height, was walking toward them, dragging a broadsword which was scraped the ground.

This knight was dressed in black armor. The metallic sounds of metal colliding could be heard with his every step. Two blobs of red light akin to flames peeked out from the slit of his faceplate; they were staring at Klein and Elizabeth intently.

The will of a wraith… Still not at the stage of an evil spirit. Klein, who was in his spirituality state, didn't need to activate his Spirit Vision.

According to the classifications based on the Nighthawks' confidential information, the feelings of vengeance and injustice left behind by spirits were the weakest and easiest kinds of souls to deal with. Following those were shadows and wraiths. Evil spirits were the most difficult soul-like

creatures to deal with. The most horrifying of evil spirits were said to be as strong as High-Sequence Beyonders.

With this in mind, Klein took a step forward, blocking Elizabeth behind him. He then stomped down with his foot and shattered the dream.

Multiple specks of light scattered like fireflies. Klein's spirituality returned to his body, allowing his eyes to once again adapt to the darkness of the Red Agate room. He saw the tools needed for divination placed around the table, as well as the Dream Charm that had almost finished burning.

Klein felt the pinch when he saw this. Charms in the Evernight Goddess's domain were all made using pure silver, so it pained his heart.

Using these charms is akin to burning money! Even if I don't account for my labor costs, the materials alone already averaged to about six to eight soli per charm!

Well, he felt a little more at peace when he thought of the Beyonders from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. After all, they burned gold—the corresponding metal for the Sun was gold.

Elizabeth groaned softly and slowly woke up before straightening her posture.

She glanced furtively at Klein and asked, "Mr. Moretti, were there any results from your divination?"

"Yes." Klein nodded seriously. "Your nightmares should disappear in no more than a week."

*I will report this to the Captain and get him to send someone to deal with it at Lamud Town… *Klein added in his heart.

"Really? That's great! Thank you Mr. Moretti!" Elizabeth became excited. She then suddenly creased her brows.

"What's the matter?" Klein asked in concern.

"Nothing. I just remembered that I have to go home now." She slowly took out a single soli bill that she had prepared and placed it on the table. She then grabbed her hat and bade goodbye to Klein a little hesitantly.

After leaving the Red Agate room, Elizabeth walked toward the stairs outside the door. She flailed her arms after she confirmed that no one was watching and groaned softly, "Pins and needles! How numbing…"

…

In the Blackthorn Security Company, Dunn rubbed his forehead as he looked at Klein.

"Did you suddenly return because you came across another supernatural incident?"

Hey, Captain, what's with that tone of disparagement… Klein cleared his throat and answered without hesitation, "Yes."

"What's the matter this time?" Dunn Smith rubbed his forehead again.

Klein organized his words and replied, "Two things. For the first incident, I discovered 'Monster' Ademisaul hunched in a corner, shivering in fear when I was buying materials for my charms at the underground market."

When he said that, he hinted heavily that he needed a reimbursement for the materials.

Klein couldn't mention the fees for the detective he employed to find Daxter Guderian, for it involved the red chimney. He deeply regretted not employing separate detectives.

Dunn seemed to fail to read between the lines as he nodded slightly.

"What happened to Ademisaul?"

Klein exhaled silently and described in detail, "Ademisaul had a dream. He dreamed that there were corpses and blood everywhere. One of the corpses was his, and thus he became very frightened."

Dunn thought for a moment before asking slowly, "As a Seer, what do you think it symbolizes?"

"A disaster. A disaster that spans a wide area. But I have no information other than this. Furthermore, not everything in Ademisaul's dream might have a symbolic meaning," Klein said while deliberating his words.

"I will report this to the Holy Cathedral and see what they have to say." Dunn shook his head and said in a self-deprecating manner, "This isn't something I have expertise in."

Klein didn't have any other ideas either. He changed the subject and spoke about the wraith harassment Elizabeth faced.

"Lamud Town… Is that lady a believer of the Goddess?" Dunn asked.

"Yes." Klein gave an affirmative answer.

"Then there should be no problems. Let's head over to Lamud Town now and try to get dinner there. Oh, and bring Frye along. His abilities should prove useful if the incident involves corpses and ghosts." Dunn massaged his temples and tried his hardest to contemplate whether he had forgotten anything.

If Elizabeth wasn't a believer of the Evernight Goddess, then they would have to hand her over to the Mandated Punishers or the Machinery Hivemind according to her faith. If her faith didn't lie in any of the three major Churches, then she would be handed over to the Machinery Hivemind who were responsible for the outskirts.

Klein didn't speak. He waited silently for a while before finally hearing Dunn add, "Also, we have three men on the mission. We can request to use Sealed Artifact 3-0782."

"3-0782?" After a minute, Klein recalled that the Sealed Artifact was called the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

This Sacred Emblem's Beyonder influence seemed to be able to last a long time. It had the ability to constantly purify any corpses and spirits in a fifteen-meter radius. However, it had the drawback of purifying the soul of a commoner at the same time. Research data indicated that if a normal human were to stand within its radius for an hour, they would become an idiot that only knew how to praise the Sun. The limit for Beyonders was six hours.

As for ghosts and corpses, they would scatter in less than a minute.

*Hmm, to think that the Captain would remember the codename for this Sealed Artifact… Damn, I feel that my memory is worse than his… *Klein suddenly froze, nearly wanting to hang himself.

Dunn Smith leaned back and looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes.

"You went to the Divination Club again today? Did you feel any changes over the past two days?"

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CHAPTER 134
IT'S BEEN MORE THAN A MINUTE

*Captain, that's the exact question I wanted you to ask! *Klein nodded seriously.

"I feel even better. I even believe that I can pass the Holy Cathedral's examination right now. It's a kind of feeling and confidence that can't be described with words."

Realizing that his answer could be a little vague, he couldn't help but add, "Perhaps the name of a potion is really crucial. When I strictly followed the Seer principles that I derived and acted as a fortune-teller, everything became perfect and easy. Yes, I can now activate my Spirit Vision with an even more inconspicuous manner."

Dunn creased his eyebrows slightly as the light in his eyes converged, he muttered seemingly deep in thought,"The name of the potion…"

After about ten seconds, he looked at Klein again.

"Do you need to return and inform your family? Sunday is the second day after your duty at Chanis Gate. You're supposed to get some rest."

Taking into consideration the fact that Elizabeth was a good friend of his sister, and that he had promised that the problem would be solved within a week, Klein answered without hesitation, "We don't have to waste time. After we set off, just get the carriage to take a turn by Daffodil Street."

"Alright. Get Frye while I fill out the application form to get Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out." Dunn pointed at the break room diagonally opposite.

Frye was a Corpse Collector, so he didn't possess the abundant energy of a Sleepless. If he was free, he would take a nap.

Filling in the application form yourself, approving it yourself, and collecting it yourself… Captain, our management system is quite flawed… Klein lampooned silently before he retrieved his hat and exited Dunn's office to knock on the door diagonally opposite.

After Klein knocked thrice, Frye opened the door and looked at Klein with undisguised puzzlement.

"What's the matter?"

As he was taking a nap, his hair was messy and his shirt was untidy. His cold and gloomy temperament faded quite a bit.

*However, he still looks like a dead person that climbed out of his coffin… *Klein hid his smile and answered seriously,

"There's a case that involves wraiths. The Captain wishes for your assistance."

"Okay." Frye lifted his hand subconsciously to smooth out his messy hair, returning him to the cold person that kept the living at bay.

After he dressed up, the two of them waited by the sofa in the reception hall. The surroundings warmed up after another seven or eight minutes, as though the area was being exposed to sunlight.

Immediately following that, they saw Dunn Smith walk through the partition while he held in his hand an ancient badge about half the size of a palm.

The badge had a dark gold luster and was engraved with the symbolic signs of the Sun and lines that extended to the edge. It was the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from the Intis Republic, originally named the "Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem."

The Intis Republic was the country that Roselle transformed from an empire into a republic before turning it back into an empire. Now, it had established itself as a stable republic and was located on the west coast of the Northern Continent. Its border with the Loen Kingdom included landmarks like Midseashires, the Hornacis mountain range, and so on.

Since the establishment of Intis as a nation, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun had repressed the Church of the God of Craftsmanship which later became known as the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. With it being the main religion of the country, the country could also be referred to as the Kingdom of the Sun.

"Let's set off. Frye, you'll drive. Cesare can't withstand the purification of the Sacred Emblem for too long," Dunn reminded them calmly.

Cesare Francis was a clerk who was in charge of purchasing and collecting supplies. He was also their driver, but he was just an ordinary person. He couldn't stay more than an hour within a fifteen-meter range of Sealed Artifact 3-0782. The journey from Zouteland Street to Lamud Town, according to Klein's understanding, would require at least two and a half hours. That didn't include the time to detour to Daffodil Street.

"Alright." Frye didn't object but checked if he had his personal items with him.

…

When the rays of the setting sun dyed the pinnacle of the town's cathedral, the Nighthawks' carriage finally arrived at Lamud Town.

The town was located at the northwest edge of Tingen. Many buildings still had the unique characteristics of the era before the Age of Steam. There were nearly zero factories and the nearby villages engaged in commercial trading.

After they stopped the carriage, Dunn looked at the hair salon opposite and said,

"I asked one of the locals earlier. It only requires a fifteen-minute walk from here to the castle ruins on the mountain. It's said that it belonged to a feudal lord who ruled during the Fourth Epoch. However, no one knows what happened after that. Of course, their description is merely a local myth."

"Yes, let's go over now and deal with that wraith before the sky turns dark. Then, we can take turns to watch over 3-0782 and keep it away from commoners?"

From the moment Dunn retrieved the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, three hours had already passed. It was getting closer and closer to a Beyonder's limits. In no time, they would have to part ways and give each other time to recover.

"Okay." Frye gave a succinct reply.

"I have no problem about that." Klein touched the Slumber Charms and Requiem Charms in his pocket.

The three Nighthawks in thin black windbreakers walked through the street in the town and headed toward the mountain when they reached a fork in the road. Along the way, the road was overgrown with weeds and clustered with shrubs, but it was still spacious enough to let two carriages pass side-by-side.

It wasn't long until they saw a collapsed outer wall of an ancient castle. On the outer wall that was still standing, there were green plants crawling all over it while the exposed part was mottled.

When he started to get close, Klein could feel a piercing chill as goosebumps formed all over his arms.

"There really is a wraith," Frye said monotonously as he looked at the ancient castle.

Dunn looked sideways to steal a glance at the newly promoted Nighthawk, then he laughed and said, "Don't worry. We have both 3-0782 and Frye; the wraith won't cause too much of a problem."

He held his custom-made revolver in one hand and the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in the other. He took the first step towards the ancient castle that looked like a ruin.

Klein followed closely behind and prepared to pull the trigger at any time, swing his cane, or use his charms.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

When Dunn was less than five meters away from the ancient castle, where a broken horse stable, water well, and other fixtures were reflected in Klein's eyes, a cold breeze howled in a way that could only be described as sad and shrill. It seemed to be rejecting the uninvited guests.

The three Nighthawks didn't stop. The warm and pure feeling gradually dispersed the chill and conquered the front of the ancient castle.

They scaled the pile of rocks, passing through the collapsed outer wall before slowly entering the castle which had lost its main entrance and was filled with broken tiles.

The hall of the ancient castle was full of collapsed stone pillars and was covered with moss. It was spacious, but the windows were narrow and placed high on the walls. Hence, the lighting was poor. It looked dim and gloomy inside.

That's also a trait of buildings from the end of the Fourth Epoch and the beginning of the Fifth Epoch… Klein, who was a historian, instinctively made a judgment and activated his Spirit Vision.

Just then, an illusory yet piercing roar suddenly burst out. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a thick cloud of black fog filled the air, resisting the infiltration of warmth and purity.

A tall figure suddenly surfaced amidst the black fog. He wore full-body, black armor and carried a broadsword that a commoner would have found difficult to lift.

The wraith looked identical to the one Klein saw in Elizabeth's dream. Two flame-like balls of red light shone through the gap of his helmet, appearing cold, but they were staring at the three Nighthawks angrily.

"You have disturbed my slumber! You will have to pay with your flesh and blood!" He suddenly launched himself forward and instantly shortened the distance to Dunn. He suddenly slashed downwards with his broadsword.

Dunn retreated swiftly and lifted his hand to fire his revolver.

Clang!

The silver demon hunting bullet didn't manage to penetrate the illusory black armor and only produced a crisp but unrealistic sound.

Klein and Frye retreated to the side simultaneously. One held a gun in one hand and aimed at the two balls of fire that took the place of the black-armored knight's eyes before pulling the trigger. The other Nighthawk transformed his eyes into a tranquil grayish-white and focused on the wraith.

The black-armored knight roared in anger again. He took another huge stride towards Dunn and swung the broadsword horizontally.

Bam!

The broadsword didn't hurt Dunn, but it knocked him away, causing him to land heavily by the side of the door. It left him spewing a mouthful of fresh blood.

With a loud thud, 3-0782 dropped on the ground. Since it was wearing a metal boot, the wraith eagerly kicked with its right leg and sent the dangerous badge out the ancient castle's door. It was a distance beyond fifteen meters from it.

Klein, who hadn't managed to shoot the wraith successfully, became nervous and puzzled when he saw that scene. It was as though he was overlooking the transformation before his eyes from a calm and rational position.

Bang!

He fired another bullet. The silver demon hunting bullet hit the wraith's helmet and produced sparks. But there was no obvious damage.

"Right gauntlet!" Frye shouted. He was always cold and gloomy, but now his tone was filled with anxiety.

No sooner had he finished talking, he lifted his revolver as well and aimed at the wraith's right metal gauntlet.

*Bang! Bang! *Klein shot sub-consciously according to Frye's instruction, firing silver demon hunting bullets almost simultaneously with him.

This time, the wraith didn't block it with his armor but raised his broadsword and struck the two bullets away.

*Bam! *He took a stride and charged at Klein, colliding with him directly.

As Klein flew out, he saw his chest cave in, saw himself spitting blood, but he didn't feel uncomfortable, not one bit.

He suddenly snapped out of his daze, fell on the ground, rolled about, and screamed.

Suddenly, the ancient castle, the wraith, the collapsed pillars, and the moss floor shattered eerily. Everything returned to black fog in the air, just like when the black-armored knight first appeared.

The only difference was that Dunn held both his fists tightly, bowed slightly, and his gray eyes were dark and deep.

As expected, everything was just a dream. Captain pulled the wraith, Frye, and I into his dream at the same time. But I'm special, and I can remain clear-headed and rational… Klein realized that he was still standing two meters away to Dunn's right. He hadn't vomited any blood or screamed.

Just then, Dunn stood up straight and looked at the wraith that was going to slash with his sword. He calmly said, "It's been more than a minute."

The wraith was stunned and let out a shrill cry. Its body started producing black steam, as though it had just received its death sentence.

Any zombies or spirits that had yet to turn into evil spirits couldn't stay within the fifteen-meter range of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for more than a minute!

Holy shit, Captain, you're so cool! Klein looked at the scene from the side and nearly let out a cheer!

Dunn had used his dream ability not to attack the wraith on his own turf, but merely to drag out the time!

In the warm and pure feeling, the black steam evaporated quickly and the chill dispersed gradually. In no time, the knight became transparent and

blended into the void.

Clang!

A black gauntlet fell to the ground, its surface covered with white frost.

Klein was about to ask for the Captain's go ahead to pick up the "drop," but when he looked over, his spirituality was suddenly disturbed.

Somewhere near the stairs that separated the hall and the dining hall, there was an intense yet illusory misery and uncleanliness summoning him!

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CHAPTER 135
PORTRAIT OF A BARON

"There's some sort of problem there," Klein said with a serious tone, pointing at the steps separating the living room and dining room.

He once read in the Nighthawks' confidential records that if similar situations appeared in one's spiritual perception, it usually implied that there was something evil and corrupted hidden at the target location. It was best not to interact with it if one wasn't confident; otherwise, one might lose their life. Sometimes, even a mere glance could result in irreversible damage.

Dunn looked over, and similarly, with his high spiritual perception, he immediately sensed something wrong. He turned to look at Klein and instructed calmly, "Divine and see if we would be successful in our investigation."

Captain didn't get me to divine before we entered the castle. He was rather confident… That means that he believes that the hidden thing might be more dangerous than the wraith. Klein nodded in silence. He holstered his revolver and handed his cane to Frye.

He then released the topaz bracelet within his sleeve, held the silver chain with his left hand and silently recited a suitable statement.

Instantly, his eyes darkened as a breeze started spiraling around him.

"The investigation of the hidden place in the ancient castle would be successful.

"The investigation of the hidden place in the ancient castle would be successful."

…

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein's eyes regained their normal color. He saw the dangling topaz rotating clockwise.

It wasn't very obvious, but it was unmistakably rotating clockwise!

That meant that the investigation would be successful.

Klein, who was already a true Seer, immediately nodded at Dunn and Frye.

"The danger will be manageable by us, or there could be no danger at all."

Dunn pinned the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem to the left side of his chest, then pressed down on his hat. He briskly walked toward the steps and expertly started searching for a mechanism.

Frye, who had picked up the gauntlet, handed Klein's cane back to him. He grabbed his revolver and cautiously scanned the surroundings, as if he was afraid that an enemy would suddenly appear.

I'm still not professional enough… as a Nighthawk… Klein geared himself up and took out his revolver, and turned alert as well.

A few minutes later, it was unknown what the kneeling Dunn Smith triggered as heavy sputtering sounds emanated from the staircase.

The floor split open, revealing a set of steps heading down. A cold and corrupted vibe emanated, seemingly condensing into something corporeal.

Dunn glanced over and removed Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from his chest. He tossed it directly into the trap door.

After a few clanks, it was unknown where the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem stopped.

If there are dead spirits within, they would definitely toss 3-0782 back out… That would be interesting… Klein stared at the stairs and waited patiently.

The lingering sinister and corrupted feeling soon dissolved away like snow meeting the sun. Warmness and purity blanketed the entrance of the trap door.

"Klein, go down with me. Frye will stay here and prevent other enemies from destroying the mechanism." Dunn made an experienced decision.

"Alright." Klein didn't shrink back from the task. He took two steps forward and arrived next to Dunn. Frye nodded, not letting his guard down.

Dunn went down first, his footsteps reverberating in the silence.

He didn't prepare any sources of light, for a Beyonder that went down the Sleepless pathway, the darkness was not an obstacle, but a blessing.

Their vision wasn't hindered by such an environment.

After taking a few steps down, Dunn suddenly turned around and looked at Klein. "I forgot that you don't have night vision. I'm not used to preparing objects that provide illumination…"

"… Captain, you don't need to mind about me. I have my Spirit Vision." Klein realized that he wasn't shocked at all.

That cool Captain from before was indeed not normal!

In his Spirit Vision, the darkness before him was screened by a gray film. Even though it was very blurry, it was enough for him to make out where the steps were.

*Well, the Captain sure is healthy, and his mental state is fine too… *Klein carefully extended his feet and made his way down slowly.

The flight of steps wasn't long. It only took about fifteen steps to reach the ground.

Sealed Artifact 3-0782 was lying there, releasing its purity and warmth. It also radiated a faint glow.

Klein could see much more clearly with the help of the illumination. He surveyed the surroundings and noticed that it wasn't a huge basement. It was no longer cold and sinister, but the dampness remained.

In the middle of the basement was a black coffin, with dark red nails driven into the lid.

The lid of the coffin had been pushed open slightly, allowing one to see a headless corpse that was all bone.

Dunn looked around, then bent over to pick up the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"Captain, this coffin… It was intended to prevent the dead within from becoming a zombie or a wraith."

Klein looked at the dark red nails in the coffin and the formation they were in. He used his decent mysticism knowledge to determine that this was an ancient ritual to prevent anything the corpse from reanimating.

At the same time, he muttered inwardly. *But under normal circumstances, who would have nothing better to do than guard against their loved one from reanimating? Hmm, the people who helped bury the corpse must not be family… And if they placed the coffin in the basement instead of a tomb, they must have been afraid of someone finding the corpse…*

Dunn, who had worn Sealed Artifact 3-0782 again, approached the coffin and inspected it.

"The deceased was probably poisoned to death."

"That means the person who poisoned him must have used ritualistic magic to prevent him from reanimating and seeking revenge. This should have happened about 1300 years ago? He became a wraith in the end… The resentment of this spirit is simply shocking!" Klein also walked in front of the coffin. "Where is his head? That ritual does not call for the head to be sliced off…"

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, "I have a deduction. This wraith didn't exist all the time and only appeared recently. It's only a fifteen-minute walk from the town to the castle. Throughout the years, troublemakers must have frequented this place, but before this incident, there were no rumors of there being a wraith in this ancient castle."

Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"Captain, what you mean to say is that someone came here recently, opened the coffin, and took away the head of the deceased?"

"Yes, the ritual prevents the corpse from reanimating, but it also seals and preserves its resentment within the coffin. When the coffin was opened and the ritual dispelled, this resentment quickly evolved into a wraith with the help of its gauntlet…"

"There's no corpse of the person who opened the coffin, so he's not an ordinary person… Besides, why did he take away the head of the deceased?"

Dunn stared at the skeleton in the coffin. "For resentment to be preserved for such a long time, there should be some reason other than the ritual. He could've been a Beyonder when he was alive, perhaps a descendant one or

two generations removed of a Mid-Sequence Beyonder. I am talking about the Mid-Sequencers as defined in the past, Sequence 5 or 6.

"And such corpses are always special. His head might be usable in some kind of ritual or in some other occasion."

Dunn paused before continuing, "What I said just now was all conjecture. But we can try to verify some of it. We can split up later in town and investigate to see if anyone was injured before in their youth. Well, if they are still alive, it would prove that the wraith only appeared recently."

"A logical train of thought," Klein praised. He quickly searched the basement but didn't find anything else.

He tried using ritualistic magic to make a sketch of the "guest" that entered the basement, but because it had been more than a month since it happened, as well as the disturbed environment due to the frequent appearance of the wraith, there wasn't much of a result.

He then took Frye's place, allowing the expert on the dead to conduct further tests.

Fifteen minutes later, as the sun was vanishing below the horizon, Dunn and Frye followed the steps and returned to the hall of the ancient palace.

Dunn felt for the switch to the trapdoor while Frye gave a short description, "The deceased was indeed poisoned to death. The traces near the neck appeared recently, at the very most three months back."

This means that it's highly probable that someone came here before… Klein nodded in thought.

The three Nighthawks returned to Lamud Town before it got dark and asked for two rooms at an inn. The member that got the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 was to take this dangerous item for a stroll outside the town where no one

would be. They would change their shifts once every two hours, and thus only needed two rooms.

After a simple dinner, Klein, Dunn, and Frye immediately split up and covered all corners of the town, asking the residents who had lived in this town for extended periods of time.

In situations like this, their identification documents as policemen proved useful.

…

"Officer, why are you asking this? I used to head to the abandoned castle to play when I was young… Injured? Definitely, how could a child not have fallen while playing? I remember, yes—I've been cut by a sharp rock on the outer walls of the ancient castle in the past…" A forty-year-old blond man looked puzzledly at Klein, but answered his question honestly.

This was the fourteenth person Klein had asked, of which two vividly remembered being injured in the castle when they were young.

The Captain's deduction is correct... Klein decided as he put away his identification documents. He smiled and said, "Thank you for your cooperation, I have no more questions."

He was about to leave when the forty-year-old man called after him, "Officer, are you interested in the ancient castle? I have an oil painting of the first Baron that resided in there. He was the grandfather of my grandfather of my grandfather… Well, anyway, it was a long time ago. He took away a oil painting from the castle and told me that it was the oil painting of the first Baron Lamud.

"Do you want it? It's a true antique!"

If it was a true antique, your family would have sold it a long time ago… This guy sure is gutsy, daring to fool even the police. Should I scare him

with my gun? Klein lampooned and adopted the attitude of a window shopper and said, "Who knows if it's a real antique or not? I'll trust my own judgment.

"Take it out and let me see it."

The blond man smiled and returned to the room and rummaged for it.

Some time later, he walked out with a oil painting in hand.

Klein casually looked at the oil painting. He saw that the baron had gentle features and bronze skin, his eyes hiding an indescribable range of human experience. He was also wearing a white curly wig.

*Huh, he looks a lot like Mr. Azik! *Klein's eyes suddenly opened wide, his gaze subconsciously falling below the right ear of the baron.

He then looked at the unremarkable mole near the ear.

The position of the mole was exactly the same as Mr. Azik's mole!

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CHAPTER 136
THE STUMPED KLEIN

*This can't be right… How could Mr. Azik be the first in the so-called line of barons, Baron Lamud? This is a figure who lived fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago! No way, how can I be sure that the person in the portrait is the first Baron Lamud? *Klein looked at the oil painting, his mind buzzing in confusion. It was like everyone around him had become monsters or a dream where the entire world was filled with gods.

He looked up and stared at the blond middle-aged man. He extended his hand to grab his revolver from his armpit holster and said in a deep voice, "This is not an antique. If you don't clarify the situation, I will arrest you and charge you with fraud!"

He didn't care if prosecution fell under the police department. His only goal was to threaten the man to get information!

At the same time, Klein clicked his left molars twice to activate his Spirit Vision. Then, he looked at his target's emotional color changes.

The blond man jumped in fright and said in a panicked, muffled voice, "No, I'm not sure if it's an antique either. No, I heard that it's an antique, but I don't know much about such things. I really have no idea. I don't even know many words, yea—words."

He eyes darted around anxiously, seemingly about to cry for help.

Just then, he saw Klein adjust his revolver's cylinder and hammer. He looked as though he was going to shoot a suspect that resisted.

He suddenly stood straight and stopped looking around.

"Where did you get the oil painting?" Klein asked heavily.

The blond man's lips quivered as he said with a fawning smile, "Officer, this is what my grandfather found in the ancient castle, more than forty years ago. An outer wall and the room on the second floor collapsed, revealing these items, items that people couldn't find in the past. One of them was the oil painting. No, no, no, not this oil painting. The original oil painting was torn and couldn't be preserved. So, my grandfather found someone to make a copy of the painting. Mm, the one you saw just now, I didn't lie to you. An oil painting from forty years ago could really be considered as an antique…"

"Are you sure that this is the portrait of the first Baron Lamud?" Klein stroked the trigger and made sure the man's gaze didn't move an inch.

The blond man chuckled and said, "I'm not sure, but I'm guessing so."

"Reason?" Klein nearly laughed at the man's shamelessness.

"Because there wasn't any labels on the oil painting," the blond man replied seriously for once. "Just like I'm called the Scoundrel Gray, my father is called the Curly-Haired Gray, and only my grandfather was the real Gray."

Klein exhaled silently and asked, "Where's your grandfather?"

"In the cemetery, he's been buried there for almost two decades. Next to him is my father who was buried three years back," the blond man answered honestly.

After Klein asked a few questions from different angles, he adjusted the cylinder in front of the blond man and put it back into his armpit holster.

He put away his police identification and turned around in his black windbreaker before walking towards the motel with his hands stuffed into

his pockets. He walked quietly along the street underneath the dim light that was shining out from the houses that lined both sides of the street.

I can't confirm if the portrait is that of the first Baron Lamud… I wonder if the town has the exact historical records of the ancient castle…

Regardless, the man in the portrait must be a person from the past, at least a thousand years ago…

Besides the hair, he looks almost identical to Mr. Azik. Is this what we call reincarnation?

Back when Mr. Azik gave up his position in other universities in Backlund and came to Tingen, perhaps it was driven by instinct…

Hmm, there's another possibility. Such as, the man in the portrait is Mr. Azik and Mr. Azik is him!

Having thought of this, Klein felt a jolt. He nearly stumbled on the steps ahead.

He paced back and forth around a damaged gas street lamp and tried to incorporate his knowledge from the world of information overload. According to his earlier guesses, he made a further inference.

Mr. Azik might have become immortal due to some reasons, such as being a vampire. Could that be why he's survived for so long?

*That's not right. When has there ever been a bronze-skinned vampire… *

Plus, when I shook hands with Mr. Azik, I could clearly feel his body temperature and the fresh blood that flows within him.

Although he dislikes the heat of the South, he isn't afraid of the sun. He once competed in a rowing competition with other teachers under the hot sun…

Hmm, there's another possibility. Mr. Azik's Sequence potion or some other factors bestowed him with a long life, and the price for it is memory loss! Man, taking into consideration his various dreams, can I presume that he loses his memory as part of a cycle? Every few decades, he forgets his past and gains new life. Then, his dreams are the lives that he has lived before… Heh heh, I think I've read something like that before in a novel…

I can't just rely on divination to verify this. I have to look for the traces of the lives that Mr. Azik lived, traces of him not having a childhood, but starting directly as an adult!

Klein started leaning towards his latter guess. However, he temporarily couldn't eliminate the possibility of reincarnation.

He reined in his chaotic thoughts and considered carefully whether he should inform Captain Dunn about it.

If Mr. Azik was a Beyonder that lived for a thousand years, his ability would be much stronger than I imagined…

He advised me out of kindness. However, it would be hard to say if he will remain kind when I find clues about his past.

But Mr. Azik has been nice to me all this time. To involve the Nighthawks would result in a non-trivial possibility of harming him…

Sigh. It looks like I must divine this matter in the world above the gray fog. This is the most proper choice for a Seer!

Klein made the decision and returned to the hotel quickly.

Since Dunn and Frye had yet to return, he seized the opportunity to get another room at the cost of one soli.

After he entered the room, Klein made a spirituality wall with the assistance of Holy Night Powder. Then, he took four steps counterclockwise, went

through the mad ravings, and arrived above the gray fog.

The lofty palace stood tall and silent while the ancient, mottled bronze table and twenty-two high chairs remained the same.

Klein took the seat of honor and made a brown goatskin and black fountain pen appear before him.

He picked up the pen and wrote seriously: "I should tell Dunn Smith about Mr. Azik."

Then, he took the topaz pendant from his left sleeve and did a spirit pendulum divination.

The spirit pendulum divination resulted in the pendulum spinning counterclockwise, which meant that he shouldn't tell him!

Putting down the topaz pendant, Klein thought about it and decided to make an attempt with dream divination, just to be sure.

Thus, he changed his divination statement to: "The result of hiding matters related to Mr. Azik from the Nighthawks."

Klein held the goatskin, recited the statement seven times silently, and leaned backwards to enter a deep sleep.

He saw himself in the illusory, blurry, and distant world. He saw that he was struggling while drowning in a sea of blood.

Then, there was a hand that extended and pulled him up from the blood sea. The owner of the hand was Azik with bronze skin and a small mole near his ear.

The image shattered and reorganized. Klein saw that he was in a dark and gloomy emperor's final resting place. The surrounding coffins opened one after another.

Azik stood next to him, looking forward, as though he was looking for something.

Just then, Klein exited the dream in an instant and saw the illusory, gray, and boundless fog.

The symbolic meaning of the earlier dream is that, if I were to hide the related matters about Mr. Azik, I would receive his assistance when I'm in danger in the future. Heh, the danger might have come about because I helped to keep the secret… What does the last scene mean? I will discover some mausoleum with Mr. Azik? Yes, perhaps the mausoleum has other symbolic meanings… Klein clasped his hands together and supported his chin while he interpreted the contents of the dream divination.

Combining it with the earlier result of the pendulum divination, he decided to not report his inference to the Captain, but merely bring up that a townsfolk had taken out a portrait of the first Baron Lamud, and that the portrait looked like a history teacher in Khoy University. Klein couldn't be sure that Dunn wouldn't hear about it elsewhere, so he had to at least mention it.

Of course, Dunn was unfamiliar with Azik and didn't know of his recount and strange dreams, so he would find it difficult to connect them. Klein even suspected that the Captain wouldn't quite remember what Azik looked like.

Then, he stopped thinking further and planned to leave the world above the gray fog. Just then, he noticed the crimson star that had been silent all this time was twinkling with faint light again.

Klein extended his spirituality with interest and saw the young man that spoke Jotun again. He saw him kneeling before a pure crystal ball.

The young man was still wearing the black tights that were different from the clothing of countries in the Northern Continent. His facial features were blurry and distorted, but Klein could faintly see his brownish-yellow hair.

He knelt there and prayed with an unusual pain in his tone.

Klein leaned sideways to hear. He relied on his beginner-level Jotun and barely understood what the young man was saying.

"O Magnificent Deity, please cast your eyes on this land that you have forsaken.

"O Magnificent Deity, please allow us, the People of the Dark, be freed from the curse of our destiny.

"I am willing to dedicate my life to you, using my blood to please you."

…

A land that was forsaken… People of the Dark… Magnificent Deity… Klein murmured the few key words and suddenly thought of a place that The Hanged Man had mentioned once.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods!

*It appeared in Roselle's diary too! He even sent out a fleet to search for it, but it was fruitless… *Klein squinted his eyes and wondered if he had guessed correctly.

He tapped on the edge of the long bronze table with his fingers. After three taps, he came to a decision. He extended his right hand and touched the illusory crimson star.

The cloud of crimson immediately exploded, and the light flowed in like water.

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CHAPTER 137
CITY OF SILVER

City of Silver, Mortuary.

Derrick stood in front of a flight of stairs as he looked straight ahead with reddened eyes. In front of him were two coffins containing his parents.

Embedded in a stone plate in front of him was a simple silver sword. The frequent booming of thunder caused the house to shake and the sword to sway.

The Berg couple inside the coffins weren't completely dead yet. They struggled to keep their eyes open while making weak attempts to heave for air, but in the eyes of some, the luster of their lives could no longer suppress their irreversible darkening.

"Derrick, do it!" An elder dressed in a long black robe looked at the youth and said in a deep voice with a staff in his hand. The expression of the youth was visibly contorted.

"No, no, no!" Derrick, who had brownish-yellow hair, shook his head repeatedly. He took a step back with every word, and finally let out a ear-piercing scream.

Thump!

The elder struck down his staff and said, "Do you wish for the whole city to be buried along with your parents?"

"You should know that we are the People of the Dark who have been forsaken by God. We, we can only live in a cursed place like this and all the dead would become horrifying evil spirits. There's no way to reverse it regardless of what we do, other than—other than ending their lives by the hands of a family member!"

"Why? Why?" Derrick asked in despair, shaking his head. "Why are the citizens of the City of Silver destined to kill their parents the moment they are born…"

The elder closed his eyes, as if recalling what he had experienced in the past. "This is our destiny, this is the curse we must bear, this is the will of God…"

"Draw your sword, Derrick. This is a show of respect for your parents.

"After this, when you have calmed down, you can try becoming a Divine Blood Warrior."

In the coffin, Berg tried to speak, but he could only let out a groan after his chest heaved several times.

Derrick took several steps forward with great difficulty, returning to the side of the silver sword. He extended his shivering right hand.

His brain registered the cold touch of the metal, causing him to recall the Blood Ice his father brought back when he went hunting. Blood Ice the size of a mere palm was enough to keep his home cool for a few days.

Images flashed past his eyes—his stern father teaching sword techniques, his friendly father patting away the dust on his back, his gentle mother mending his clothes, his brave mother stepping in front of him when they encountered a mutated monster, and finally, his family huddling in front of a flickering candle and sharing food…

A faint sound croaked from his throat despite his utmost suppression. With a low grunt, he exerted force with his right hand and drew the sword.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He lowered his head and charged forward, raising the sword and driving it down with force.

Ah! Blood splattered following a pained scream. The blood splattered onto Derrick's face and into his eyes.

His vision became red. He pulled out the sword and pierced it into the coffin by the side.

After the sharp metal pierced through flesh, Derrick released his grip and wavered as he stood up.

He didn't look at the condition of the people inside the coffin. Derrick stumbled as he ran out of the Mortuary, as if he was being chased by evil spirits. His fists and teeth were clenched tight. The blood on his face left streaks across his face.

The elder who had taken in everything from the side sighed.

There were stone pillars that lined the main streets of the City of Silver. Atop the stone pillars were lanterns, and within the lanterns were unlit candles.

There was no sun in the sky here, no moon, no stars; only an unchanging darkness and lightning that threatened to tear apart everything.

The citizens of the City of Silver walked along the dark streets with the illumination of the lightning. The few hours when the lightning died down was considered by them as the true night as mentioned in the legends. That was the time where they had to use candles to light up the city, drive away the darkness, and make it serve as a warning for the monsters.

Derrick made his way along the street. He didn't have anywhere he wanted to go, but as he walked, he realized that he had reached the door of his house.

He took out his keys and unlocked the door. He saw the familiar sights, but he didn't hear his mother's concerned voice or his father reprimanding him for running about. The house was empty and cold.

Derrick clenched his teeth again. He walked quickly to his room and searched for the crystal ball. His father had told him that this was a crystal ball used by a long-destroyed city to worship their deity.

He knelt and faced the crystal ball, praying without any hope in mind. He pleaded bitterly, "O Magnificent Deity, please cast your eyes on this land that you have forsaken.

"O Magnificent Deity, please allow us, the People of the Dark, be freed from the curse of our destiny.

"I am willing to dedicate my life to you, using my blood to please you."

…

Over and over again, just as he was in complete despair and about to stand, he saw a dark red glow burst forth from the pure crystal ball.

The glow was like flowing water, instantly swallowing Derrick.

When he regained his senses, he realized that he was standing in a magnificent palace supported by giant stone pillars. In front of him was a long ancient table, and on the other side of the table was a human figure obscured by a thick fog.

Other than that, there was nothing around him. It was empty and ethereal. Under him was a boundless fog and incorporeal dark red specks of light.

Derrick felt a flame of hope ignite in his heart. He stared at the human figure at the very top, confused and puzzled.

"You, are you God?"

After asking this, he suddenly remembered a statement he read from a book in the City of Silver and quickly lowered his head.

That statement was: "You may not look directly at God!"

Klein leaned back as he crossed his hands. He adopted a relaxed posture and answered using the language of the giants, Jotun, "I am not God, I am merely The Fool who is interested in the long history of this world."

Klein had already activated his Spirit Vision by clicking his left molars. He noticed that the youth in front of him had different colors covering the surface of his Astral Projection and the depths of his Ether Body.

This meant that he was not a Beyonder.

*The Fool… *Derrick ruminated over the term and, after a long silence, said with difficulty,

"I don't care if you're God or The Fool, my prayers will not change. I hope that the people of the City of Silver will be freed from the curse of their destinies. I hope that the sun and sky described in the books will appear in our skies. If possible—if possible, I wish that my parents can be revived."

*Hey, I am not a wishing well… *Klein put down his hands and laughed.

"Why should I help you?"

Derrick froze. He thought for some time before saying,

"I will offer my soul to you. I will use my blood to please you."

"I have no interest in the soul and blood of a mortal." Klein smiled and shook his head. He saw the color of the youth's feelings turn into the color of despair bit by bit.

Without waiting for the youth to speak, Klein nonchalantly said, "But I can give you a chance."

"I am a Fool that likes a fair and equal exchange. You can use what you can attain to exchange with me, or people like you, to exchange for things you want. But remember, they must be equal in value…"

"This can make you powerful. Perhaps one day, you can rely on your own strength to free the City of Silver from its curse and make the sun appear in your sky once again."

Based on the youth's description, Klein was confident that the City of Silver was the so-called Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Of course, he couldn't be certain of this for the time being. After all, the religious literature claimed that the world existed in a "sunless" state during the First Epoch, the Chaos Epoch. No one knew if there were any other strange lands that the countries of the Northern Continent were unaware of, other than the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Derrick listened quietly. He lowered his head in silence and replied after a while, "I want to become the Sun. I wish to obtain the formula of the corresponding starting Sequence potion from you."

Sequence, potion, the Sun… The Sequence pathway that the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun possesses… From the looks of it, we exist in the same world…

The term "Sequence" was born from the revelation of the first Blasphemy Slate, which happened at the end of the Second Epoch, the Dark Epoch… In other words, if the City of Silver is really the Forsaken Land of the Gods,

this means that it was split apart from the Southern and Northern Continents at the end of the Second Epoch.

Could this be related to the cataclysm of the Third Epoch? According to the legends, the Evernight Goddess, Mother Earth, and the God of Combat descended upon this world and protected humans from the cataclysm along with the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom… Klein obtained a fair bit of information from the youth.

But he had trouble interpreting what the youth was saying, and even more trouble organizing his words, as he wasn't fluent in Jotun.

Luckily, ancient Feysac was derived directly from Jotun. Klein could be described as an expert in that area, and thus, he could master Jotun relatively quickly, preventing him from making a fool of himself.

Klein maintained his posture. He replied with a calm tone, "We can discuss this transaction in the future. Do not go out for the next two days. Try your best to not be in the same room as anyone else."

He didn't know the unit of time used in the City of Silver, much less the time difference it had with the Loen Kingdom. All he could do was generalize it as tomorrow and wait until the Tarot Gathering was over before he told him that was the time for future meetings…

Klein knew that there was a term for "day" in the Jotun, and thus deduced that the youth would understand even if the City of Silver didn't use it as a measure of time.

"Alright, I'll follow your instructions," Derrick replied with his head lowered. He didn't have any objections.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He tapped his fingers on the side of the table and said, "Before I send you back, let me first complete our equal exchange. I gave you a chance to be strong, and you have to give me something equal in return."

"I have said that I am The Fool who is interested in the long history of this world. What I ask in return is the history of the City of Silver, everything that you know."

Derrick thought for a moment before replying softly, "I will describe it faithfully."

"The City of Silver has existed ever since the omnipotent and omniscient God, the Lord that created everything forsook this land. No, it existed before that, but it was called the Kingdom of Silver."

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CHAPTER 138
GIANT PATHWAY

The omnipotent and omniscient God… The Lord that created everything… Klein leaned back and maintained a profound posture while he ruminated over the words that the youth from the City of Silver had said.

He was no stranger to a "Lord that created everything." The Creator mentioned in the The Book of Storms, The Revelation of Evernight, and other urban myths referred to the Creator with similar titles. It was also the way various secret organizations like the Aurora Order described the True Creator.

But this was the first time Klein was hearing of an "omnipotent and omniscient God" in this world. Be it the Evernight Goddess, Lord of Storms, and the God of Steam and Machinery, none of them claimed to be omniscient or omnipotent.

If the City of Silver was really in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, then the Forsaken Land of the Gods would truly belong to this world. The "omnipotent and omniscient God" might be the title of the Creator that was used by the living in ancient times… Klein looked towards the young man opposite him in thought. He looked at the emotional colors of pain and sorrow.

When Derrick felt The Fool's gaze, he lowered his head involuntarily.

He recalled the legends that his parents had told him. He said slowly and sadly, "When the sun disappeared from the sky, when the clouds were ripped and torn apart, when lightning and thunder became our rulers, and the monsters lurking in the dark suddenly emerged, ones so terrifying

beyond one's imagination, they destroyed one city after another in the Kingdom of Silver. Humanity's Dark Ages had arrived.

"The remaining experts in the City of Silver then relied on their united power and two magical items before they finally warded off the attack of the Things of the Dark. They gradually eradicated the monsters within a one day journey of the city, and they established a city-state that protected the last light of human civilization."

A standard textbook description… Klein couldn't help but comment in his head.

The young man's description made him feel that the City of Silver was in a different world than the Northern Continent.

Maybe this is the unique characteristic of the Forsaken Land of the Gods? He thought, without revealing his emotions.

Derrick calmed his breathing and continued, "During the first few decades, plants couldn't grow. The City of Silver had a severe lack of food, and we could only hunt dark creatures or mutated animals to relieve our hunger. The population dropped drastically. Fortunately, we found Black-Faced Grass. It could survive under such circumstances, and it became our only reliable and stable food source.

"It was said to be the final intervention that the magnificent God left for us. It allowed one generation after another to live on in the City of Silver. It persisted in the Dark Ages for 2582 years.

"The passage of time was recorded by a long line of Chiefs. For the rest of the people in the City of Silver, we call periods of frequent lightning 'day,' and when the lightning subsides, we call it 'night.' It's a rather confusing system, and it makes exact dates difficult to pinpoint."

*Such a magical place… *Klein was glad that he hadn't talked about "tomorrow," but instead vaguely mentioned the following two days.

Derrick briefly talked about the few memorable incidents in the City of Silver's history and said, "When the population returned to a certain level, the number of Beyonders increased. The six-member council started forming elite troops to explore the dark. We have now explored all of the original territory and nearby cities. We are advancing towards the darker and more terrifying depths of the dark. At the border, we found cities with strange architectural style, but they were destroyed at some point. We suspect that they were sanctuaries built by other remaining humans. Unfortunately, they still lost to the Things of the Dark in the end."

The Things of the Dark that he mentions should be a reference to monsters that hide in the dark, ones that are beyond imagination. Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"… The Kingdom of Silver was once ruled by the Giant King. Hence, the Beyonder chain that we are in control of is the Giant pathway, also known as the Divine Blood Warrior sequence pathway… When we killed certain monsters and explored those destroyed cities, we obtained potion formulas of other Sequences. However, the Sequence pathways are incomplete," Derrick said, moving on to explain the current situation in the City of Silver.

Upon hearing that, Klein's mind jolted. Although he didn't change his posture much, he was obviously paying more attention.

I love knowing more about Sequence potions! The Giant King… The City of Silver and the Northern Continent share the same history? The Second Epoch's history… Hmm, killing a monster causes it to drop a formula? Is this a game? No, there's another possibility. Those monsters were once human, Beyonders… Klein suddenly felt a heavy weight on his shoulders.

Derrick saw that the Fool didn't reply. He clenched his teeth, pondered, and said, "The names of the Giant Sequence pathway are Sequence 9 the Beyonder Warrior, Sequence 8 Gladiator, Sequence 7 Weapons Master, Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin, Sequence 5 Guardian, and Sequence 4 Demon

Hunter. Only the elders in the six-member council know the names of the higher Sequences."

Sequence 4 Demon Hunter… This is the name of a High-Sequence potion formula? This is the first time I've heard something like this! Klein felt delighted at the fact that he finally learned one of the names of the higher Sequences. However, he suspected that it was a name from ancient times, which would be different from the current version in the Northern Continent, just like the Windstorm Priest and the Seafarer.

Oh, Beyonder Warrior, Gladiator, Weapons Master… Sounds familiar… Oh right, the Sequence pathway that the Church of the God of Combat has in control is very similar to this! Sequence 9 Warrior, Sequence 8 Pugilist, Sequence 7 Weapons Master! Due to the limits of his security clearance, Klein only knew the titles of the first three sequences that the Church of the God of Combat had in control, but the similarity between the two pathways was still obvious.

Based on the core meaning, they are basically identical. The complete Sequence that the Church of the God of Combat mastered is the so-called Giant Sequence pathway… It is said that there was a God that emerged in the Third Epoch, which was the Cataclysm Epoch, to inherit the estate of the Giant King? Or could it be that He Himself was an ancient Giant? Klein analyzed and judged while he maintained his calm appearance.

Derrick continued to explain.

"After we pulled through the initial hardships, the City of Silver has been ruled by a six-member council ever since. The elder that enjoys the highest position in the council is called the Chief. The other five are equal in rank… The current six-member council is formed by three Demon Hunters, two Guardians with the greatest potential, and a Shepherd."

The City of Silver has three High-Sequence Beyonders! Demigod-like experts! These three alone could destroy the Tarot Club a hundred times

over… Klein felt a little afraid. He had yet to attempt recruiting someone under the nose of a High-Sequence Beyonder.

However, since the young man was just a mere commoner, with him not even at Sequence 9, it was unlikely that he would gain the attention of the upper echelons for a long time. Thus, Klein relaxed again.

*Is Shepherd from another Sequence pathway, perhaps from one of the incomplete pathways? Sounds reminiscent of the style of the Aurora Order. The member from the Aurora Order that wrote a letter to Mr. Z, what was his name again? He kept mentioning the "Lord's lamb"… *Klein maintained his leisurely posture and asked casually, "Shepherd?"

"Yes, this is a Sequence pathway that we found from a city that the Things of the Dark destroyed. It only reached Sequence 5 Shepherd, but Elder Norwaya is very strong, very strange, and very scary. It is said that she once won against an evil spirit at the level of a High-Sequence Beyonder without getting injured. Therefore, when there was a vacancy in the six-member council, they made an exception for her," Derrick, feeling a little fear.

Klein thought, then smiled as he asked, "What's the Sequences before Shepherd? I find them familiar. As you know, a sequence's historical name and its current name is always different."

"In the City of Silver, the names of potions have never changed," Derrick refuted instinctively. He then lowered his head and said, "Sequence 9 Secrets Suppliant…"

Indeed! Klein was satisfied when his guesses were confirmed.

This is the name of Sequence 9 from the Aurora Order!

"Sequence 8 is Whispered, Sequence 7 Shadow Ascetic, Sequence 6 Rose Priest, Sequence 5 Shepherd," Derrick recounted what he knew.

*Whispered, Listener, they are about the same… Heh, I know more than the information provided by the Tingen Nighthawks. *In a good mood, Klein beckoned for Derrick to continue.

Derrick then roughly described the current situation of the City of Silver, and finally, he couldn't help but say, "I carry the curse of destiny. Whether a citizen of the City of Silver is a commoner or a Beyonder, we all turn into evil spirits after we die. The evil spirit of a Beyonder is just stranger, more terrifying, and far more difficult to deal with. In the past, there were many occasions when this curse nearly destroyed the City of Silver. The only way to prevent an evil spirit from rising is for a person to be killed by someone of their own bloodline."

"Such a cruel matter. I hope you can grow strong and find a method for the people in the City of Silver to shake off the curse." Klein, The Fool who was merely an empty shell, could only provide some free chicken soup for the soul.

"So, I want to be the Sun… When there was a Sun shining over the land, we had never encountered any curse," Derrick muttered softly with great difficulty and pain.

Klein nodded slightly and asked, "You will have the chance to. Remember, that I can pull you in here anytime in the next two days. Try to avoid being around other people."

"Alright," Derrick replied solemnly.

"Before that, I need you to confirm your code name." Klein smiled and pointed at the deck of tarot cards that appeared on the table.

Confident that Derrick had never come into contact with tarot cards, he gave a brief introduction. "Pick one of the cards as your code name. Anything besides The Fool, Justice, and The Hanged Man.

Derrick took two steps forward, flipped through the tarot cards, and said without hesitation, "Sun. I pick The Sun."

"Remember your choice, it will follow you for the rest of your life," Klein replied like a charlatan.

At the same time, he extended his hand and severed the connection in a restrained manner. Then, he watched as the crimson glow receded, and the young man opposite him turned incorporeal and dispersed bit by bit.

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CHAPTER 139
STUDYING 3-0782

After the crimson light in front of him dissipated, Derrick Berg saw his room once again. He saw the pure crystal ball in his hands.

Crack!

The crystal ball shattered from the inside. Some of it turned into pieces of illusory beams of light that flew into the void around him, while the other crystalline fragments fell noisily to the ground.

Derrick looked on, dumbfounded. He could see the traces of blood on his face reflected in the bronze mirror. He noticed a crimson light spiraling on the back of his right palm, forming a circle with lines extending out from the edge.

The strange symbol bore into the back of his palm and vanished.

Derrick fell into a daze in the time it took several flashes of lightning to illuminate the sky before snapping to his senses.

He looked at the fragments of the crystal ball on the ground, then looked at the back of his right hand as his gaze turned deeper.

He walked out of his bedroom, returned to the living room, and opened the door to look up at the sky above the City of Silver.

An arc of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the city with a silver sheen. Right on the heels of that was rumbling thunder. The world

belonged to the dark. Without any speck of light, the heavy darkness only left people in despair.

Derrick clenched his fists. There was no joy in his eyes for they were still filled with the remnant grief and pain.

But he was no longer lost.

…

Phew, looks like I've managed to trick another person into becoming a member. No, I've managed to recruit another member… Klein shook his head and mocked the present strength of his Tarot Club.

The leader, The Fool, was only a Sequence 9, one who had just fully digested the Seer potion!

And there were at least three High-Sequence Beyonders at Sequence 4 in the hopeless City of Silver that The Sun spoke of!

"After mentioning the acting method one more time, I can start telling the Captain the specifics and hand in my special application. At the very least, I'll stop being in charge of support once I become a Clown." Klein didn't stay in the world of fog. He extended his spirituality, wrapped it around himself, and initiated a descent.

Tearing through the gray fog and passing through the ravings, he returned to his room before dispelling the wall of spirituality.

Then, Klein picked up the key and headed out of the room. He first went to the two rooms booked by Dunn to take a look in order to confirm that the Captain and Frye hadn't returned yet. He then headed to the first level and handed the key back to the boss.

The boss looked at the wall clock to the side and gave a thumbs up.

"Well done!"

Hey, are you mistaken over why I booked an hourly room? Klein wanted to explain himself, but finally decided to leave the misunderstanding as it was.

Feeling wronged, he tried to console himself.

Yes, this way, he won't mention that I rented another room in front of the Captain!

After heading out and going through the motions, Klein did a quick divination and returned to the inn based on the results. He headed straight to the second floor to find Dunn and Frye discussing their investigations in one of the rooms, just as he expected.

"We can confirm that the wraith appeared within the last three months," Dunn summarized to Klein with a nod as he came through the door.

Klein immediately echoed, "My investigations also confirmed it…"

He highlighted the main points of his questioning and concluded, "Heh, there's a townsfolk named Scoundrel Gray who claimed that he had the portrait of the first Baron Lamud. He said that it was an antique oil painting more than a thousand years old."

"Don't tell me you bought it?" Dunn's eyes shimmered as he was taken aback before he asked.

Captain, do you think that I'm so stupid to be fooled that easily? Klein gave a dry laugh.

"No, I didn't. Even though I'm a history student, I have attended some lessons on archeology and have some degree of experience in this area. I can more or less determine if something is fake. Heh, the person in the portrait looked a little like my history teacher, Mr. Azik."

He casually mentioned the most important piece of information.

And indeed, Dunn didn't pay too much attention to it. He massaged his temples and said, "This is a small town near a historical site. There will always be a myriad of 'antiques' here. I just saw a vendor selling the silver wine glasses of Baron Lamud."

"Someone tried to sell me the insignia of the Lamud Family, claiming that it had been dug out of the castle," Frye added.

Klein subconsciously asked, "Did you guys buy them?"

Frye and Klein looked at each other, and didn't continue with the subject.

"The next mission is for you or Frye to take Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out of town to somewhere uninhabited. Otherwise, a good half of the people in this inn will become idiots blathering praises of the Sun. Are you going first, or Frye?" Dunn looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes.

"Me." Klein raised his hand slightly and smiled. "It's still quite early, so I can come back and have a nice sleep later. We're doing two-hour shifts, right?"

"Yes. Frye, go over with Klein and confirm where you'll exchange the Sealed Artifact." Dunn turned to look at Corpse Collector Frye. He had already found an opportunity to hand Sealed Artifact 3-0782 over to Frye when they split up to conduct their investigations. Otherwise, he would have been purified and started praising the Sun. Frye hadn't had enough time to recover, and could only hold the item for another three hours.

"Alright." Frye took out the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem from the inner pocket of his black windbreaker and handed it over to Klein.

Klein took the item with a fair bit of curiosity and interest. The metal was warm to the touch, as if hot water was flowing within it.

The warm, gentle glow was like a ripple, spreading outward in waves and bringing with it a pure smell. At the same time, Klein felt that the dark golden Sacred Emblem carved with the symbol of the Sun was cleansing his spirituality, removing the impurities and leaving it pure.

Of course, all Sealed Artifacts have their dangers. Death might occur if one isn't careful enough. It's even possible to have a fate worse than death… He muttered to himself as he placed the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 into his inner pocket.

After inspecting his revolver, charms, and cane, he walked out of the room and left the inn together with Frye. They headed straight for the outskirts of Lamud Town.

The two circled an area beside a sparse and deserted forest and confirmed that there was no one within dozens of meters of them.

"Chase away anyone who approaches you," Frye coldly reminded, "I'll come to take your place in two hours."

"Sounds good," Klein replied with a smile.

After seeing Frye enter the town, he found a tall boulder he had eyed previously. He picked up some leaves from the tree beside him and wiped the surface of the boulder.

He then touched the top of the stone with his finger and inspected the stone under the light of the crimson moon.

After confirming that it was clean, Klein put on his black windbreaker and sat down.

Why stand when you can sit! Klein thought to himself.

After a few minutes of silence, he looked at the dark, quiet, and rather scary forest. He couldn't help but stand up, taking out several metal bottles from

his hidden pockets and scattering their contents—herb powder and essential oils—around the boulder.

Klein recited an incantation in Hermes. With the help of the materials, he created a barrier of spirituality, sealing the area he was in.

He did this simple ritual for two reasons. First, he didn't want to rely too much on his premonition for danger as a Seer to defend against corpses and spirits launching a sneak attack against him. The second reason was to—was to keep the bugs away…

This is a hundred times better than insect repellent! Klein sat back down, satisfied.

After sitting there for a few minutes, Klein took out Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out of curiosity. He began a detailed inspection of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

I wonder if I could use divination to find out its origins and how it became special… He took out the pen and paper he always had on him and wrote a statement: "The origin of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in my hands."

As a qualified and true Seer, Klein had made the preparations needed to divine anywhere.

After reciting the statement seven times, he closed his eyes and entered a state of Cogitation, using that as a launchpad to propel him into his dreams.

All he saw were fragmented pieces of light in his dreams. Other than that, he didn't learn anything else.

Yes, the Church must have gotten other Seers to attempt the same thing in the past. The fact that there is no mention of its origins must mean that there was no result from the divination, just like what happened just now… Klein sighed. He then thought, I wonder what would happen if I eliminate the interferences?

This thought immediately filled Klein's head, pushing his curiosity to a peak.

After more than ten minutes of hesitation, he stood up. He decided that it was fine since there was no one around, considering how he was in a secluded area of the forest. He took four steps counterclockwise inside his wall of spirituality before entering the world above the fog once again.

Klein sat at the seat of honor of the ancient table in the magnificent palace. He conjured a few sheets of yellowish-brown goatskin and a black fountain pen, as well as the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"It feels rather real…" He rubbed Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands, finding the tactile feedback identical to the one he had felt in the outside world.

It instantiates itself based on what I felt? Klein mumbled to himself before writing down the statement he had come up with previously:

"The origin of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in my hands."

After reciting the statement seven times, he held the piece of goatskin and Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands. He leaned back and entered his dream.

In the blurry dreamworld, Klein saw a drop of glowing gold liquid. It was warm and bright.

It was suspended above an altar, before a man dressed in a white classic robe.

The man only had his back facing Klein. He had lost all signs of life as he fell slowly towards the sacrificial altar.

At that moment, the Sun Sacred Emblem he was holding had come into contact with the golden liquid, the latter quickly seeping into the emblem.

The dream quickly dissipated after Klein saw this, waking him up.

So it was because of the golden liquid that this Sacred Emblem has been so effective and uncontrollable to this day. Hmm, decades have passed since the discovery of this emblem, but its cleansing powers haven't declined. I wonder what that golden liquid was? Some advanced Beyonder ingredient? Klein toyed with the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hand and slipped into deep thought.

After deliberating over it for a few minutes, he tried to emulate the feeling he had in the dream. He wanted to separate the golden liquid from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem he had conjured.

He accomplished it almost immediately as the thought came to him. Klein looked in shock at the emblem which was no longer warm or pure. He watched as the drops of golden liquid silently suspended themselves in the air. He had even more praises for this mysterious space above the fog.

This is practically a miracle, even if the separation and instantiation here isn't real!

"The origins of this drop of golden liquid." He penned down a new statement with great excitement.

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CHAPTER 140
EXPERT AT COURTING DEATH

"The origins of this drop of golden liquid."

After reciting the divination statement seven times, Klein held onto the goatskin and the illusory golden liquid before leaning back in his seat.

He didn't know if he could divine with the item that was instantiated based purely on a feeling. All he could do was make bold assumptions and carefully seek confirmation.

In seconds, Klein's eyes darkened, turning from brown to black as he entered a state of Cogitation.

His eyelids drooped down and he "saw" the illusory yet blurry dream.

In the blurry world that looked in shambles, a golden, glaring sun suddenly appeared!

A low grunt resounded across the void. The pure and clean light suddenly lit everything up as the gold and burning flames swept outwards.

Boom!

Klein was instantly expelled from his dreamworld and flipped onto his side as he shivered. His body seemed to become a huge bonfire which burned with a raging flame.

At that moment, his thoughts were all over the place. No proper idea could form from the chaos in his mind.

Rumble!

The mysterious space above the gray fog shook violently, and the lofty palace collapsed inch by inch. The ancient, mottled bronze table broke into a few pieces.

The terrifying changes only continued for three seconds before the world above the gray fog returned to tranquility as though nothing had happened.

The gold flame on Klein gradually extinguished. He rolled around on his charred skin as he groaned in pain, until he eventually regained his ability to think.

He supported himself on the armrest of the high chair and stood up with great difficulty. He was terrified and confused about what had just happened.

He had never imagined that a mere divination would result in such consequences!

He panted and lifted his head to survey his surroundings. He realized that the lofty palace and ancient bronze table, which looked like they had stood unchanged since ancient times, had been damaged. In the world above the gray fog, which had never experienced any abnormality, it was simply an unprecedented level of damage.

What happened? Did my divination point towards some unfathomable existence? Klein calmed down slightly and let his burned flesh shed while he speculated. *If I wasn't protected by this mysterious space above the gray fog, there might not even be ashes of me left behind… Could that drop of gold liquid be the blood of a god? Did I see the Eternal Blazing Sun, or some powerful angel of His? No, that was the sun, so I think it was the former… Damn, did I just look directly at a god?

Klein felt more fear as he thought about it. He felt that he had nearly died.

Those who know nothing fear nothing, but those who don't court death won't die… In the future, I can't just divine anything and everything. Who knows what I'll see!

If that were to happen once more, I don't know if this mysterious space could even shelter me from fatal damage… When that happens, I'd actually die…

Yes, it definitely won't do if I continue making experiments with the golden liquid. The existence from before which was likely Eternal Blazing Sun. He must have sensed the sudden, hidden and unexpected influence from the divination above the gray fog and failed to respond in time… If He were prepared, this mysterious space might not have been able to withstand the repercussions…

Having come to this realization, Klein's body had already returned to normal. It was no longer charred, but compared to before, he was dimmer and more incorporeal than before.

He lifted his hand to massage his temples and commanded with his mind to restore the palace and the long table.

Then, the palace that looked like the home of a giant and the long table cast out of bronze returned to normal. Everything looked like it had before.

Klein sat down and leaned against the back of the chair. He mocked himself and said,

Well, this isn't entirely bad. At least I know the limit of the mysterious space and I have a certain goal… Only powers approaching the angels of the gods can completely influence the power of the area above the gray fog?

Sigh, I have to add another new rule to my Seer principle. 'Do not randomly divine things that involve a high-level entity.' Yes, I shouldn't hastily activate my Spirit Vision either. If I were to look directly at things that

shouldn't be looked at directly, it might be game over. In the outside world, I don't have the mysterious space to fend off most of the negative effects…

After a while, Klein's expression turned odd because some knowledge was reverberating in his head.

Yes, knowledge!

In the short time he had spent with what appeared to be Eternal Blazing Sun, Klein was constantly in his divination state. Hence, he could instinctively divine certain matters and knowledge from the being that he was looking at.

He quickly used a dream divination to recall and organize what he had gathered that wasn't his primary objective. He picked up the black fountain pen and wrote one line after another.

"1. Do not look directly at God.

"2. Pure white angel.

"3. The technique of making a Flaring Sun Charm… It's a relatively high level charm in the domain of the Sun. Its potency can last a year before it deteriorates… There's no need for a ritual to pray to the Eternal Blazing Sun, but the procedure requires the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 to take the ritual's place. It will siphon power from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem…

"4. Extremely hostile towards Lord of Storms and God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

"5. Bard potion formula:

Main ingredients: a Crystal Sunflower or an adult Flint Bird's tail feather or a Fire Bird's tail feather… A piece of Siren Rock or a Singing Sunflower…

Supplementary ingredients: a blade of Midsummer Grass, 5 drops of July Wine Juice, a blade of Elf Dark Leaf…

"6. Light Suppliant potion formula:

Main ingredients: a piece of Brilliance Rock or powder of Dazzling Soul or… Blood of a Mirror Hedgehog or the Heart of a Magma Titan…

Supplementary ingredients: a Golden-edged Sunflower, three drops of Aconite Juice…

"7. Priest of Light potion formula:

Information of main ingredients missing.

Supplementary ingredients: 5 grams of Rosemary, 7 drops of fingered citron juices, Rock Water…

"8. Sequence 4, Unshadowed potion formula. Main ingredients could be the golden blood of god extracted from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. It could also be replaced with three adult Sun Divine Bird's tail feathers and a piece of Holy Brilliance Rock.

Information of supplementary ingredients missing…"

After writing down the eight lines, Klein couldn't help but rap the edge of the long bronze table.

He had gained way more than he imagined!

He was already satisfied with surviving his reckless divination earlier, but now he had received an unexpected "survival reward."

From the confidential information he received from the Nighthawks, he knew that the Sequence pathway that the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun held was called Sun, and its Sequence 9 was Bard. It would allow the

Beyonder to imbue courage and strength for themselves and their allies through their singing, a "job" that brought about devotion and submission. Their slogan was "Let us praise the Sun!"

The corresponding Sequence 8 was Light Suppliant. They could cast spells and hold rituals from the Sun's domain which were very effective against corpses and spirits. Sequence 7 was called Solar High Priest, which greatly enhanced the spells and rituals within its domain.

In other words, I have obtained the complete potion formulas of Sequence 9 and Sequence 8 in the Sun Sequence pathway. Yes, unlike before, the potion formula even lists replacement items and ingredient names from different eras… As expected of formulas obtained directly from Eternal Blazing Sun through divination! Klein thought in satisfaction.

He had originally planned on seeing if The Hanged Man could solve the request of the young man from the City of Silver. After all, the Church of the Lord of Storms and the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun were the most ancient orthodox sects. They had fought against each other for thousands of years, so it would only make sense for the two churches to have learned the initial sequence of each other's pathways.

The Hanged Man might not have cared about the Sun pathway previously, but since he is very likely a Sequence 7 Seafarer, it would probably be easy for him if he really needed to gather the information. However, I don't need him now. I solved it myself, through an unbelievable yet extremely dangerous method… Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, my Sun friend, your Fool nearly turned himself into a charred corpse… Klein lampooned silently while still feeling a lingering sense of fear.

He lowered his head and looked at the records on the goatskin before him. He thought of another formula.

Would the Priest of Light be an ancient name of Solar High Priest? The confidential information of the Nighthawks never mentioned it, and my

divination didn't pinpoint the Sequence number… Is it Sequence 6, or Sequence 5?

Sequence 4, Unshadowed… This is the first High-Sequence formula that I've obtained! It's such a pity that it lacks the supplementary ingredients. I wonder how I can fill in the blanks? I can't believe that drop of golden liquid is really the blood of a god. Sealed Artifact 3-0782 is probably far stronger than anyone imagines. From what I can see, it's sufficient to become a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

Yes, it's likely that the Nighthawks from before only determined whether the item has any traits of the living, how much danger it would cause to nearby humans, how difficult it is to control the item's effects, and if it can be used against corpses and spirits. They had no way of discovering its unique origin.

The Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem can probably even fight against evil spirits… How could the examiner find an evil spirit to experiment on?

As an official Nighthawk, I can't become the owner of Sealed Artifact 3-0782, but, yes, I can find an opportunity to make a Flaring Sun Charm and siphon its power? Sigh. I certainly can't do it now. I haven't prepared the necessary ingredients. Why would I, a Nighthawk of the Evernight Goddess, carry the ingredients of the Sun around with me?

Klein massaged his forehead regrettably. He saw that there was no other movement in the world above the gray fog and finally relaxed. He confirmed that the Eternal Blazing Sun hadn't managed to track him down.

Do not look directly at God, do not look directly at a high-level entity. I must remember this!

Why would the Eternal Blazing Sun be extremely hostile towards the Lord of Storms and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?

What the hell is a pure white angel?

…

As these mixed thoughts filled his brain, Klein felt the emptiness and an aching pain in his head. Plus, he felt that too much time had passed. He had to return to the outer world, just in case someone discovered anything amiss.

Back then, he thought it would take a minute or so to divine two or three times in the mysterious space. Plus, there was a spirituality wall isolating him from everything else. Once it was touched, his body in the world above the gray fog would sense it. Hence, he felt utterly safe, but he hadn't considered the possibility of having some sort of accident. In the end, he nearly lost his life and that wasted quite a bit of time.

Due to the fact that he was afraid that he would be greeted by a Light of Purification beam or discover that the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem was damaged, he enveloped his body with spirituality before he stimulated a descent with his heart in his mouth.

The crimson moonlight reflected in his eyes, and there was a darkness hidden within. Klein saw the sparse forest and the weeds before him, as well as the intact Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hands.

After a few seconds of breathless anxiety, he finally believed that he was safe.

Phew… Klein let out a breath of relief. He felt exhausted after his insane probing at the border of death.

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CHAPTER 141
NIGHTMARE

The exhausted Klein dispelled the sealed wall of spirituality, allowing the cool wind to blow onto his face. The scent of grass and trees that the wind carried revitalized him.

He rubbed the warm and classic Sealed Artifact 3-0782 with his hands and sighed to himself.

"Who would have thought that there would be a drop of god's blood in this emblem? I have to assume that the experts from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun must have tried searching for this item in the past, but couldn't find it…"

Klein stretched his neck. He didn't dare try anything else, keeping the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in the inner pocket of his windbreaker.

His hand followed a chain and took out a silver vine-leaf pocket watch. He opened it to see that there was still about an hour before Corpse Collector Frye's shift.

I need two matches to prop up my eyelids… This is a side effect of that near-death experience! Klein didn't have any other ideas. All he could do was take out a small metal bottle from a tiny hidden pocket. He uncapped the bottle and brought it near his nose.

A pungent smell, a mix of mint and disinfectant, quickly entered his nose, giving Klein goosebumps. His senses were jolted, making him forget his fatigue temporarily.

He had learned the formula from Corpse Collector Frye. It was called Quelaag's Oil, and it could help a person ignore the stench of rotting corpses, as well as refresh and clear the mind.

The next hour felt like torture. Klein paced around from time to time, and was bitten by the mosquitoes in the forest several times.

Finally, he saw the black-haired, blue-eyed Frye walking out of the town wearing a windbreaker and holding a cane.

Even though Frye still looked like a living corpse, Klein felt as though he was looking at his savior. He covered his mouth and let out a yawn, making his eyes teary. He made his way over and took out Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from his pocket.

"What happened?" Frye asked as he looked at his partner's pale face.

Klein sighed and said, "I just did my shift at Chanis Gate the previous night and didn't sleep too well in the morning, so I'm very tired."

He didn't elaborate further and changed the subject. "Shall I come for my next shift four hours from now?"

"Seven hours. The Captain doesn't need sleep at night." Frye took the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

*I'm glad someone enjoys staying up late… *Klein ridiculed the Captain under his breath. He bade goodbye to Frye and walked towards the town.

On the way back to the inn, he took out his pocket watch again and checked the time.

*Hmm, ten minutes earlier than we arranged… What a nice person… *Klein laughed and walked faster. He returned to the inn and opened the half-closed door. The boss watched him as he made his way to the second floor before he entered his room.

He removed his coat and shoes after locking the door. He didn't wash up, but instead fell directly onto the bed.

His breathing became heavy in just a few seconds, then long and peaceful.

In his dreams, Klein returned to Earth where he was playing a game he hadn't beaten. A cup of soda and a plate of spicy chicken wings were on his left. To his right was a bowl of rice and bitter bamboo shoots meat soup.

He didn't like bitter bamboo shoots, but he liked it in soup with meat slices. The refreshing taste and the little bit of fat from the meat were tantalizing, a perfect complement to the rice.

He could eat an extra bowl of rice if it was paired with some good sauce dip!

Just as Klein was about to enjoy his supper and continue playing his game, his dream changed again, presenting him with the internal layout of 2 Daffodil Street.

Klein suddenly became alert, aware that he was dreaming.

He saw himself seated at the side of the dining table, a copy of the Tingen Daily Tribune in his hand. In front of him was a bowl of tomato oxtail stew, pan-fried lamb chops, mashed potatoes, and wheat bread.

He subconsciously turned to look at the door, suddenly noticing a figure standing outside the window of the living room, silently staring inside the house!

Klein was shocked. He immediately recognized the gray-eyed Dunn. Half his face was clinging close to the window as he silently watched the people inside.

*… Captain, can you not scare someone in their dreams? Is this your way of acting as an Nightmare? *Klein thought, finding humor in his

exasperation. He scooped up a mouthful of stew and put it into his mouth.

Ah, this is my cooking! He sighed to himself. He understood why he became suddenly became alert in his dream, why the scene of him on Earth vanished.

He would naturally become aware when someone barged into his dreams!

At this moment, Dunn left his spot by the oriel window and directly entered the house. In his black windbreaker, he came silently before Klein.

He took off his hat and nodded before sitting down. He didn't stand on ceremony, picking up cutlery and quickly polishing off the stew, lamb chops, wheat bread on the table.

Klein looked on dumbfounded, unsure what the Captain was doing.

Phew. Dunn exhaled in satisfaction and gave Klein a thumbs up. He then took out his pipe and a matchstick before taking an intoxicated puff.

He exhaled a cloud of smoke and stood up. He then put on his hat and bowed before leaving the house and the dream.

"…" Klein looked at the Captain's back, unable to collect himself for a long time.

He looked down at the empty plates and instinctively wanted to conjure up the food he had just now.

But this time, the oxtail stew, lamb chops, mashed potatoes didn't appear in his dream.

It was completely eaten? A Nightmare can do that? Klein twitched his lips and thought in frustration. *So the Captain's goal was to prevent me from eating supper in my dream? That sure is a nightmare… This method of acting as a Nightmare sure is creative…*

He let out a laugh and exited his dream, once again falling asleep.

At about half past five the morning the next day, Klein, who had no choice but to wake up early, drink his coffee and eat his toast and bacon. He hurried out of town to take over from Dunn.

At seven in the morning, they prepared to set off back to Tingen.

It wasn't even ten when they arrived at 36 Zouteland Street. Fyre sat behind the typewriter after Dunn, the most energized of the lot, returned Sealed Artifact 3-0782 to the back of Chanis Gate. He took advantage of the fact that the clerks hadn't arrived yet so that he could write a report on the mission and the claims of the related expenditures.

Klein looked on from the side, satisfied that the items he had expended were within the list—including the materials he used to drive the bugs and mosquitoes away.

He didn't return home immediately, for he had arranged to meet the asylum's Doctor Daxter at one in the afternoon at the agreed upon venue through a coded letter.

*Then there's still the Tarot Gathering at three… Why does the boss of a secret society have such a tiring life? *Klein thought to himself. He took a two-hour nap in the Nighthawks break room to catch up on sleep.

He didn't forget the information he had obtained the previous day. He wasn't worried that he would forget, for the information could be recalled using divination. He was afraid that he would disregard the existence of this information and even lose the ability to divine the information. Thus, he recalled the pieces of information once again before he slept to reinforce them.

This was also the reason Klein insisted on doing a review every week and reorganize all the information he knew.

After lunch, he took a look at his pocket watch and left the Blackthorn Security Company for the Shooting Club at 3 Zouteland Street.

Klein entered the reception area after pushing open the door, but he didn't head directly to the shooting range belonging to the Nighthawks. Instead, he found a seat in the hall as he waited patiently with his black cane in hand.

He had arranged to meet Daxter at the Zouteland Street Shooting Club!

He had arranged this through handwritten letters. Whenever Klein needed to meet him, he would write to Doctor Daxter Guderian in place of a patient's family member and ask about a unique condition called "dissociative identity disorder." In his letter, Klein would use various methods to mention the term Spectator, as well as a hidden mark of ink to authenticate his identity. The letter would also casually mention a time to meet.

As for the place to meet, they had already decided this the first time they met. If Klein felt that there was a need to change the location, he would mention it when they met in person.

When Daxter Guderian needed to meet for nonurgent matters, he could send a letter to the Hound Pub or the Shooting Club. The recipient would be marked as Mr. Hornacis which Klein would take at scheduled times.

In urgent situations, he could hand the letter directly to the boss of the Hound Pub, Wright, and mention his "search for mercenaries." This way, Wright, who was an associate of the Nighthawks, would immediately hand the letter over to the Blackthorn Security Company.

After waiting for a while, Klein saw the refined Daxter enter the Shooting Club, a few minutes past one.

He was wearing a black hat and a fitted tuxedo. He had a cane inlaid with silver in his hands, as well as a pair of gold-framed spectacles on his face.

Daxter walked around the club without attracting attention and saw Klein, who nodded slightly. He then retracted his gaze and walked to the counter, expertly applying for a shooting range and renting a gun.

This was not his first visit.

"Small shooting range 7, 3 soli an hour. The fee for renting a revolver is one soli seven pence per hour and it contains six rounds," the receptionist quickly settled the request.

After Daxter confirmed that he was renting the items for an hour and paid the fee of 10 soli, he took the revolver and extra bullets and was led into the respective shooting range by the facilitator.

Klein waited another five minutes before slowly standing up. He grabbed his cane before walking to the small shooting range 7 and knocked on the door.

The door opened a tiny crack with a creak. Daxter first looked around cautiously, then opened the door fully.

Klein immediately entered and locked the door.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Daxter," he said as he took out a 10 soli bill. He handed the bill over to Daxter. "We wouldn't let our associates bear any extra fees."

Because I can claim compensation… He added in his heart.

Daxter didn't decline. He took the cash and asked heavily, "Mr. Moretti, why did you ask to meet me?"

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CHAPTER 142
ASSOCIATION

Klein obviously couldn't just bring up the Telepathist formula right at the start. However, he didn't hide his intention either. After all, the man opposite him was a Spectator. He wouldn't be conned so easily.

"Has Hood Eugen behaved unusually recently?" he first asked Daxter Guderian about the patient in the asylum who was a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

Daxter examined Klein's eyes, expression, and gestures. He thought and said, "No, he's acting normal. Frankly speaking, I think if he really wanted to leave the asylum, he could immediately behave in a very healthy and very normal manner. But he hasn't done so, and he continues to stay in the asylum. He appears to be treating every patient. Yes, patients who exhibit chaotic, violent, or abnormal thoughts appear to be getting better. Maybe Hood Eugen is trying to train his Beyonder powers with this method."

Psychiatrist, Sequence 7 that corresponds to Spectator? Perhaps even higher… Since Hood Eugen isn't a doctor in the asylum but entered as a patient, it means that he hasn't truly grasped the acting method. It should be as Daxter has guessed; he's probably training his Beyonder skills and doing so resembles that of the "acting method." To a certain extent, it could slow down the potion's negative influence. Hence, Hood Eugen decided to just take the asylum as his home… Klein openly showed that he was in deep thought regarding Hood Eugen's matter.

Because that would make Daxter Guderian feel that he knew and understood a lot, making him appear unfathomable.

With this in mind, Klein guessed something else. *The Psychology Alchemists hadn't grasped the "acting method." After all, even a mainstay member at the Sequence 7 was unaware of this. In this era with few Beyonders, a Sequence 7 was considered mid level in any secret organization. They were important enough to know crucial matters, especially those that could help members resist the loss of control.*

Plus, the Psychology Alchemists was a secret organization that had only been established in the last three hundred years or even earlier. It was understandable that they hadn't grasped or deduced the "acting method." The only organization that brought up the method explicitly was the Secret Order. They were an ancient organization that had more than fifteen hundred years of history and could be traced back to the previous epoch!

Hey, the Church of the Goddess is even older than the Secret Order. Just the Letter of Saints from the The Revelation of Evernight clearly indicates that it's nearly three thousand years old. That's not to mention the mythical legends before that… How could such an ancient church not discover the "acting method?"

During the long history of a huge organization, there must have been members who experimented with various possibilities, just like Spirit Medium Daly. They might not have understood the principle of the acting method in detail, but they acted out the name of the potion correctly anyway. They would have discovered the gist of it through the good feedback they received. As that accumulates through the generations of Nighthawks, unless the higher-ups were a bunch of curly-haired baboons, it would be impossible to deduce the "acting method!"

Klein's thoughts made the connection and was suddenly shocked.

To the Nighthawks who didn't know of the "acting method," someone like Spirit Medium Daly was a genius, an example that an ordinary member couldn't emulate. Hence, no one suspected that the experience of Daly and others could be adapted for their own use.

But to those who have grasped the "acting method," this would be extremely odd!

Klein believed that in the long history of the Church of the Evernight Goddess, Spirit Medium Daly was definitely not the first member to have used the *"acting method"* to digest the Low Sequence potions quickly. She might not even be in the top ten or top fifty!

It doesn't make sense. Unless Daly didn't understand the "acting method" on her own, but had other people's guidance… Then, it could be concluded that every member of the Holy Cathedral follows the beliefs of the past, believing in their predecessor's experience, and not daring to rebel against their teaching. After all, rebelling would imply the loss of control most of the time… Yes, other than this explanation, there is another possibility. The higher-ups of the church have hidden the "acting method" for some reason…

I need to flip through some records and search for examples of Beyonders in the Church of the Evernight Goddess digesting their potions quickly, as well as their final outcome… Klein thought with a mask of solemnity.

Daxter looked at him, waited for a few minutes, and asked curiously, "Officer, is there some sort of problem with Hood Eugen's actions?"

"Not right now. It just made me think of other matters," Klein replied, smiling. He cast his suspicions aside.

He asked instead, "Has there been any actions taken by the Psychology Alchemists recently?"

"No, besides a small gathering in Awwa to exchange items and experience," Daxter answered honestly.

Klein nodded slightly and said, "How about your own situation?"

Daxter controlled his expression as he replied, "Not too good myself. I still hear some ravings and have some illusions. If I wasn't a doctor specializing in mental health, I might even think that I have some sort of disorder."

As he spoke, his face grew solemn. "I followed Hood Eugen's and your instructions to ignore those illusions and ravings. That made me feel much better, but they still affect my sleep, and I have become more grumpy and short-tempered. I'm not like myself, as though another new me is growing from within, or maybe it could be described as a new character. I'm very worried and terrified that I might suddenly lose control one day."

Just as I have predicted, I didn't even need to divine to see that coming… Having prepared for this, Klein smiled and said, "You don't have to worry, you're a subsidiary member of the Nighthawks now. There are benefits for you. As an ancient organization, we master many methods to keep one from losing control. It isn't one hundred percent effective, but it will definitely help you."

"Besides, I'm willing to share with you my personal experience. You must know the man standing before you only used a month to shake off the shackles of illusions and ravings, and they haven't resurfaced. You should know from Hood Eugen and your other cadres that doing so is very difficult."

For Sequence 8 Telepathist, Klein bragged a little.

"Officer, there's a bit of a lie in what you said, but it's mostly the truth," Daxter suddenly said calmly. "What do you want from me?"

It's tough to lie to a Spectator… Klein replied with a smile, "It's not something that only I want to get."

Miss Justice wants it too.

Of course, he knew that Daxter would definitely assume that the Nighthawks Squad wanted something.

"If your method is really effective, and the items or information you want is within my reach…" Daxter weighed his words as he spoke.

"I will give you the perks in advance," Klein said straightforwardly. "We want the Telepathist formula."

He wouldn't hide the potion formula but inform the Captain as well. He would tell the Captain that Daxter used it in exchange for his personal experience on bringing the potion under control.

During the procedure, Klein would definitely verify the formula and "accidentally" memorize it in his head.

Besides, he would use the fact that he used his personal experience in exchange for the formula to earn merit with the Nighthawks.

By then, with his previous merits, he might not even need to put in extra effort to apply for the Clown formula and main ingredients.

A formula for two deals, quite a good bargain… Klein thought happily.

Daxter looked into his eyes and kept quiet for a while before he said, "You're very frank… I'll try my best to get the formula, but I'm not sure how long it'll take me. If it gets too dangerous, I hope that I can replace it with something else."

"No problem." Klein didn't intend to force the request on the man. He then described the *"acting method"* vaguely. "The key to resisting the loss of control lies within the name of the potion. We have to understand it and learn its true meaning. You can't completely understand it by thinking about it. It must be understood through experience. For instance, as a Spectator, you have to understand that you're only a spectator, not an actor. How a Spectator should act is something that you need to discover through attempts and experimentation to deduce the principles required of you. From there, adhere to it strictly."

Daxter listened attentively. Then, he replied, "That's a brand new way to look at things. Heh, I'm willing to use the word 'theory' to describe what you just said. This is just like a theory of a play and opera… I'll try, and I hope it'll help.

"If—if it really works, I'll do my best to get you the Telepathist formula!"

"May the Goddess protect you." Klein drew a crimson moon on his chest.

Klein didn't request the potion formula of Psychiatrist as well, because he knew that it was a task that Daxter couldn't complete with his current position. He might end up exposing him if he wasn't careful.

Thus, he planned to take it one step at a time by helping Daxter achieve a higher position in the Psychology Alchemists slowly.

Then, the long-term benefits would be abundant.

Klein looked outside through the peephole in the door, then he left quickly and turned to the small shooting range that was designated for the Nighthawks.

He entered and locked the door. His face grew grave once again. When he was guessing the reason why the Church of the Goddess hadn't developed the *"acting method,"* he realized another thing that he had overlooked!

He had overlooked it because he had obtained two crucial factors in reverse order. It made him fail to make a further consideration.

The first matter was that the Antigonus family was destroyed by the Church of the Evernight Goddess.

The second matter was that the Antigonus family had the Seer Sequence in its grasp, or at least, most of it.

As there was a very long period of time between when Klein learned the two facts, he almost didn't piece them together. Hence, he overlooked something that should have been pretty obvious.

Since the Antigonus family had grasped a majority of the Sequences of the Seer pathway, how is it possible that the Church of the Evernight Goddess only received Sequence 9 Seer?

They should have obtained more than that as the spoils of war!

If a member from the Aurora Order got ahold of the Clown formula from the Antigonus family's magical notebook, then what about the Church that destroyed the entire Antigonus family?

Even if the Antigonus family was well prepared and hid their most valuable things at the highest peak of Hornacis Mountain, the Church of the Evernight Goddess shouldn't have gained so little. They were the ones who killed the family members of Antigonus family. Furthermore, the dead can be made to speak!

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CHAPTER 143
THE FOOL'S REAL-TIME TRANSLATOR

Klein paced around the small shooting range as he pondered over the intent of the Church of the Evernight Goddess regarding the Seer pathway.

Do they not want Nighthawks to choose this pathway, or do they not want Beyonders to become powerful through this pathway? As such, they only revealed the Sequence 9 Seer which is clearly a support type? Captain also mentioned that the Holy Cathedral might have the subsequent recipes…

No, they didn't even provide the names of the potions for Sequence Numbers 8 and 7 in the confidential information that I read. They merely described the battle characteristics of each Sequence… In other words, they don't want those under them to realize that the Church might hold the actual formulas.

Is there a possibility that Nighthawks who chose this pathway could become "vengeful spirits" for the Antigonus family, and thus, the higher-ups of the Church made a decision like this? Or could there be some other reason?

Klein suddenly felt incredibly suspicious, a sense of intense wariness and vigilance, towards the higher-ups of the Church. He began reconsidering whether he should openly hand over the special application to become a Clown.

If there are some terrifying secrets behind this, wouldn't I be jumping into the fire myself? Frankly, I'm not a person that can be placed under strict investigation…

But the Tingen branch has handed the Clown potion formula over to the Church. Any Seer who learned of this would hope to advance. Isn't that normal? Sequence 8 is still considered a low Sequence, so it shouldn't invite too much attention…

The only problem is that I would only take a month to completely digest the potion and submit a special application. If the higher-ups are familiar with the "acting method," they would be able to realize what I did immediately… Of course, I do have an excuse; I know Spirit Medium Daly after all. Old Neil, who is strict in abiding by the Mystery Pryer's maxim, is also my friend. The claim that I gained inspiration from them and refined the "acting method" isn't too hard to believe.

Yes, even Daly received attention from the higher-ups only after showing signs of digesting a Sequence 7 potion in three years, and is now being nurtured to become a future Archbishop. Being at the stage of Clown shouldn't garner me too much attention—unless I fully digest the Clown potion in a few months, giving them confirmation to believe that I have truly mastered the "acting method"…

In other words, applying for the Clown potion isn't a risky move. I can continue with that plan, but I should pay attention to this in the future. Sigh, I'll have to take things one step at a time. I'll do a divination back at home.

Klein collected himself and took out his revolver from his holster before carrying on with his daily shooting practice and maintenance.

The quality of the revolver that he had gotten from his schoolmate, Welch, was unexpectedly good. Without any surprise, it would last for quite some time. Of course, he had to credit Dunn and Leonard for teaching him how to maintain a revolver.

To be honest, it doesn't matter if it's damaged. These are all things I can request compensation for. Klein looked at the target, put away his revolver, and left the Shooting Club.

He took the public transport back to 2 Daffodil Street. Before arriving at his destination, he saw a young lady pacing about his door.

This lady was dressed in a blue lacy dress, as well as a thinly veiled hat. She was Melissa's classmate—Elizabeth who had her adorable baby fat.

She quickly approached when she saw Klein arrive, taking off her hat to reveal her joyful face.

She paused for two seconds before smiling.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti. I'm guessing that you just came back from Lamud Town, right?"

I'm sorry, I came back in the morning… Klein smiled.

"No, I came from Zouteland Street."

*Yes, that was a very honest answer… *He laughed to himself.

Elizabeth froze for a moment, then said with excitement, "Alright, I guessed wrongly. I came to look for you because I wanted to tell you that I didn't have that nightmare last night. I no longer dreamed about the knight in black armor! This was exactly the same as the result of your divination!"

Of course—that wraith was completely purified by Sealed Artifact 3-0782. I couldn't channel his spirit even if I was there, much less your dream… Klein laughed and replied gently, "I'm happy that you're freed from your troubles. I'm also very satisfied with my divination yesterday."

"Thank you, thank you once again! Alright, I have to go now, I still have lessons in the afternoon. Bye bye, Mr. Moretti. I'll visit Melissa when I have the time~" Elizabeth left joyfully, renting a carriage by the side of the road.

As the carriage began to roll forward, she smiled and thought proudly, *Melissa definitely doesn't know how great her brother is…*

…

It seems as though my explanation just now was useless. Young ladies would rather trust their intuition and the truths made up in their minds… Klein saw Elizabeth board the carriage and opened the door to his house. He made his way to his room.

He rested for a while before he began to consolidate everything that had happened over the past week, including the questions he had yet to resolve.

After completing the task, he burned his notes, took out his pocket watch, and opened it.

"Half past two? There's another fifteen minutes left…" Seeing that he still had time, Klein put on his oldest suit and headed to Smyrin Bakery at Iron Cross Street to buy a cup of sweet iced tea from Mrs. Wendy.

He drank his beverage as he returned, then sealed his room with a wall of spirituality at fifteen minutes to three. He then took four steps counterclockwise and entered the world above the gray fog.

In the quiet, ancient palace, Klein conjured a piece of goatskin and wrote down a divination statement: "I should obtain the Clown potion through the Nighthawks."

He put his pen down and untangled the spirit pendulum on his wrist. He grabbed the pendulum firmly with his left hand, allowing the topaz to be suspended right above the piece of paper.

He recited the statement seven times. His eyes darkened and the pendulum in his hand started to turn. It turned clockwise.

*It's a positive answer, so it's appropriate. But it'll be hard to say for the sequences after Clown. I should seriously develop my Tarot Club… *Klein did another divination to confirm the answer.

After this, he used his hand and pressed down on the dark red star representing the Sun.

He wanted to bring the youth from the City of Silver in early and ask if he revealed whatever had happened in this world to the six-member council. If he hadn't, then Klein would give him a better way of knowing what time the gatherings would start.

…

In a room of the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick sat silently by the side of his bed, waiting for The Fool's summoning.

In order to avoid being near anybody, he didn't even go out of the house after he "returned." He had nearly finished all the food in his room.

Bearing with the hunger and hearing the growls of his stomach, Derrick felt as though he was a living corpse roaming around on a dark plain. However, he remained silent nor did he stand.

At that moment, he saw a dark red color spread in the air, quickly swallowing him.

The gray, boundless, cold, lonely world appeared in his field of vision once again. Seated at the seat of honor, The Fool, who was obscured by the thick fog, presented himself in front of him once more.

Klein was satisfied that his "summoning" wasn't interrupted. He also confirmed that he didn't face any immediate danger.

"Sun, we meet again," he said smilingly, using Jotun.

Derrick was shocked by what had happened. He lowered his head.

"You are a Fool who keeps his word."

"The other members will arrive in a while. Before that, I'll confirm a few things with you first." Klein used the Loen language this time, but willed the mysterious space to translate it into Jotun.

The words rang through the air, coming to Derrick in Jotun. He asked curiously,

"What's the matter?"

Well, now that I've gained a certain degree of mastery over Jotun, the mysterious space above the gray fog can translate whatever I say in real time. This means that I won't have to worry about Justice and The Hanged Man not understanding whatever Sun says… Sigh, why does a boss like me have to work so tirelessly? Klein pinched the bridge of his nose. He laughed and shook his head.

"I'll permit you to recite my name; remember the incantations I'm going to tell you."

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck"

Derrick's pupils constricted when he heard that, but he didn't dare to get distracted. He recited it over and over again in his heart, then confirmed it with The Fool.

"You have to use a simple ritual and recite my name whenever you return to the City of Silver… I will notify you in advance for future gatherings. You need not pay too much attention to it on other days, nor do you have to avoid anyone. When you receive my notification, isolate yourself within a thousand heartbeats." Klein told him the method he had been deliberating on for quite some time.

This was essentially a response to a prayer.

As he had to consider the situation regarding the City of Silver, as well as save time, Klein opted to omit the other steps of the ritual since it was a plea directed toward him.

"A thousand heartbeats?" Derrick muttered to himself.

Klein described the general idea of the Tarot Club to Derrick, then took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

Derrick froze for a while, instinctively looking at the wondrous item.

When three approached, Klein extended his hand and pressed on the dark red stars representing Justice and The Hanged Man.

Derrick didn't blink as he witnessed this. He saw light burst forth opposite and beside him, as two hazy figures extended from within.

Audrey Hall surveyed her surroundings and froze suddenly. She then heard the ever-calm voice of Mr. Fool.

"This is our newest member, his code name is Sun."

"This is Miss Justice, and that is Mr. Hanged Man."

Newest member? Audrey was shocked at first, then her shock immediately turned to joy.

She was very excited to see the development of the Tarot Club. She felt like a protagonist.

The Hanged Man Alger creased his brows, a little upset that The Fool would drag in a new member so suddenly.

He should've at least mentioned it to us… But a great figure like Mr. Fool wouldn't have to care about our feelings… He thought in exasperation before giving a simple greeting to Justice and Sun.

In this short process, Audrey entered the her Spectator state and paid close attention to the newest member Sun.

"He should be quite young… His body language tells me that he's a little nervous and restrained… But he ultimately maintains a tolerable air of silence, giving the feeling of, hmm, a lone wolf, yes, a lone wolf…" Audrey thought as she cast her gaze at The Fool who was seated at the end of the long bronze table.

She said in joy, "Mr. Fool, I've collected another two pages of Emperor Roselle's diary."

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CHAPTER 144
THREE-WAY DEAL

Actually there were three pages, but the characters were too complicated and too difficult to memorize. My limit is only a little over two pages. I would mess up if I were to memorize more. The rest will have to wait until the next gathering… Audrey added in her head.

New pages of Roselle's diary? Klein's mind stirred. He smiled and asked in reply when he already knew the answer, "Miss Justice, what do you need?"

Audrey's eyes beamed with excitement, but she replied in a reserved manner, "You know that I'll soon fully digest the Spectator potion. I hope that I can get the formula for the Telepathist potion so that I can prepare the ingredients ahead of time. Hmm, I know that there isn't much content for two pages of the diary, and it might not equal to the value of the Telepathist formula, so I'll give you another page, hmm, I'll also pay you a sum of money on the side…"

She had yet to finish what she said when she suddenly felt that it had come out wrong. She couldn't help but berate herself in her head, *Mr. Fool is at the very least an important figure which approaches that of a god, how could he be bought over by money?!*

Hence, Audrey couldn't maintain her Spectator state as she hurriedly added with a stammer, "That's not what I meant! Mr. Fool, what I meant is that you can determine the compensation that you'd like. Yes, that's what I meant!"

*I like your earlier suggestion… I would answer like this: When you have fully digested the Spectator potion, you will get the formula you need. I

have a subordinate, no, I have to use the word "adorer" that sounds more awesome. He happens to be handling some matters that require money, and this is his anonymous account in Backlund Bank… Yes, then I will disguise myself and make an anonymous account in Backlund Bank. *Klein didn't answer immediately but weighed his words carefully with an unfathomable expression.

Backlund Bank was one of the seven major banks in the Loen Kingdom, and as such, it possessed the right to clear transactions.

The Loen Kingdom settled accounts with receipts to take care of cash transfer business between banks within the same city in a centralized manner. However, unlike banks in the Intis Republic, not all banks were part of the same league. The biggest seven banks held on to these rights. Hence, they were called the clearance banks, making other banks rely on them.

Transferring money from a different location, on the other hand, could only be done within the same bank. It would be completed by squaring accounts between branches. With the invention of the steam locomotive and telegram, the efficiency of these transfers had been enhanced drastically.

Just then, The Sun, Derrick Berg, suddenly spoke.

"The Telepathist potion formula? Telepathist that is followed by Psyche Analyst?"

Audrey looked towards him puzzledly. "You know of it?"

At the same time, Miss Justice saw a problem through her instinct as a Spectator.

The young man had used the ancient title "Psyche Analyst" instead of the modern term, "Psychiatrist!"

*This guy is very strange… *Audrey examined Sun's every movement.

Derrick didn't think that he behaved any differently but replied seriously, "I can get you the formula!"

Then, he felt guilty as he couldn't provide it immediately. He tried his best to explain himself, "It's a Sequence pathway that stemmed from the Dragon race. And our City of Silver was once ruled by the Giant King's imperial household. As you know, the Giants and the Dragons are sworn enemies. Hence, the City of Silver has all of Sequence 9, 8, and 7. I have ways to get them."

*This kid… I already warned him not to speak carelessly or expose his origins. In the end… *Klein nearly wanted to extend his hand to cover his face.

Sigh, although The Sun appears to be in great pain, very mature and silent for his age, he's just a boy after all! However, that clarifies one thing for me… It turns out that the Spectator Sequence's origins stem from the Dragon race. It's no wonder that the symbol formed by stars behind Miss Justice's high chair is the Dragon… The City of Silver has preserved history well… Klein maintained his posture of leaning against the back of his chair while he listened thoughtfully to The Sun's description.

In fact, he could've easily stopped The Sun from exposing those matters. As long as he didn't help in the simultaneous translation, Justice and The Hanged Man wouldn't have understood him at all.

However, Klein took a different approach. He felt that it might help him consolidate his mighty and mysterious image in the minds of the three members effectively. Hence, he listened with a smile and didn't make a sound.

Giant King, Dragon race, the City of Silver… Audrey was confused. She first took a look at The Hanged Man opposite her, but she could tell that he was shocked and confused as well from his body language.

She looked sideways towards the seat of honor on the long bronze table. She saw The Fool sitting on the high chair, engulfed in thick grayish-white fog. His right arm was placed on the armrest while he leaned sideways leisurely. He showed no shock, no curiosity, no thoughts, and no doubt. He only looked at them with a smile.

He knows… He knew all of this… Audrey and Alger made the definite judgment almost at the same time.

"The City of Silver, I've never heard of this place… Where is it?" Audrey probed while Alger listened attentively.

At that very moment, Derrick Berg's head was filled with questions as well. He could tell that, besides the godlike Fool, Justice and The Hanged Man were some sort of Beyonder.

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, besides the people in the City of Silver, Derrick had never seen another living human.

So, he asked in reply, "If you aren't residents of the City of Silver, which city-state are you from?"

Sigh… Klein couldn't help but wish to sigh again.

Audrey trembled her lips, momentarily at a loss for words.

Yes, the hidden meaning behind his question is that if you don't want to answer a similar question, don't pry into the questions about where the other person lives… Miss Justice nodded faintly and elegantly kept quiet.

Obviously, Alger had misunderstood The Sun's intentions as well. He didn't know the other person was really just asking straightforwardly. So, he kept quiet too.

When Derrick didn't receive any reply, he seemed to realize what was happening. He didn't bring it up again and instead said,

"I will try to get the Telepathist potion formula as soon as possible. I would like to use it to exchange for the beginning Sequence pathway of the Sun."

"Sun Sequence pathway? Sequence 9 Bard?" Alger asked in reply.

Derrick thought and said, "Probably, but I lack information about it."

Klein who was watching from the side decided to get involved, because he didn't want to risk anyone taking his business away.

He smiled and said, "I believe Miss Justice doesn't have the Bard formula."

But Mr. Hanged Man seems to be able to get it…

Seeing Audrey nod, Klein continued with a faint smile, "I will give The Sun the Bard formula. The Sun will pass the Telepathist potion to Miss Justice as soon as possible. Try to get it done within the next two Gatherings. Miss Justice, please pass me the new pages of Roselle's diary. Then, the deal is done."

"Yes, according to the law of equivalent exchange, The Sun is on the losing end of this transaction, but as of now, he has only made a promise. When he really provides the Telepathist formula, Miss Justice can consider how to compensate him again, or I will compensate him while Miss Justice provides money to one of my adorers who needs to do somethings recently. Heh heh, that's because The Sun might not necessarily be able to receive Miss Justice's cash or ingredients as compensation."

Klein intentionally added that final statement to redirect The Hanged Man and Justice's focus onto the fact that Sun might not be able to receive her compensation. He also did that to place himself in an unfathomable position; then, everyone would ignore the adorer that lacked money.

Might not necessarily receive the compensation… Where exactly is The Sun? The Southern Continent? Alger suddenly creased his eyebrows.

The origin of The Sun is mysterious too… As expected, Mr. Fool does have subordinates in reality. Audrey finally saw her hope of becoming a Sequence 8 Telepathist. What other thoughts could she have? She suppressed her excitement and flashed a faint smile as she said, "I have no objections."

"Neither do I." When Derrick saw that he could obtain the beginning sequence of the Sun pathway, he nodded without hesitation. He couldn't care less about the additional compensation.

Alger, who was out of the three-way deal, didn't have the right to speak. Although he could get the formula of Bard, he would need to wait a week or two as well.

At that moment, Klein, who had successfully delayed the compensation to the next Gathering, or the following one after, pressed his palm forward happily. The Bard formula surfaced.

"Main ingredients: a Crystal Sunflower or an adult Flint Bird's tail feather or a Fire Bird's tail feather… A piece of Siren Rock or a Singing Sunflower…

Supplementary ingredients: a blade of Midsummer Grass, 5 drops of July Wine Juice, a blade of Elf Dark Leaf…"

He sent the formula before The Sun and saw the young man first crease his eyebrows and then relax.

Yes, the ingredients in the Forsaken Land of the Gods will still be known by their ancient names. Luckily, my formula was obtained directly from the Eternal Blazing Sun. The knowledge that I gained used ancient names and various replacements… Klein suddenly cast his eyes of realization towards Miss Justice.

Audrey looked at The Sun who was memorizing the formula, then she quickly willed the two pages of the diary that she had memorized.

The diary immediately appeared on the yellowish-brown goatskin and, with a flash, appeared in Klein's hands.

Just like before, he started reading immediately.

"3rd November, Matilda is three months pregnant now. I even find those maidservants who come from the villages beautiful. No, I can't lower my standards. Coincidently, Countess Florais has invited me to join a private party, hehe.

"8th November, Archbishop Fan Estin sought my help. Huh, what can I do for an archbishop?

"9th November, it turns out that there is actually a secret hidden within Sequence pathways. Archbishop Estin told me that after becoming a Sequence 5 Beyonder, the rest of the Sequences could be replaced with Sequences of the same level from one or two other pathways! In other words, it starts from the Mid-Sequence to High-Sequence! But this is only limited between those one or two pathways. If it's replaced with a potion from a wrong pathway, semi-insanity is the mildest outcome, and one can't advance any further.

"This way, one can begin substituting pathways from Sequence 4 onwards. Sleepless and Corpse Collector pathways. Yes, the Church's Savant and Mystery Pryer pathways can also substitute for one another at a High Sequence."

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CHAPTER 145
REQUEST FOR COOPERATION

Some pathways are interchangeable after Sequence 5? That's different from what the Nighthawks told me!

Isn't it a fact that you cannot change your pathway after you choose one? Wasn't it mentioned that diverging from your pathway would allow one to obtain strange, mysterious powers, but that person would definitely go insane and would never be able to advance?

To think that there are some hidden exceptions to this!

Klein looked at the diary, his pupils constricting.

He didn't think that the Emperor Roselle would spout nonsense about something like this. After all, the surprise in his words were so real. But he didn't assume that the information Emperor Roselle had received was definitely correct. There was also a possibility that he had been lied to, or that he had misinterpreted the information.

*I will need to verify this. I'll commit it to my memory first… *Klein reminded himself, then thought deeply about this.

If what Roselle described here turns out to be correct, then the Sequence pathways go deeper than what I imagined… It hides many secrets…

The complete pathway possessed by the Nighthawks is Sleepless. They also possess a relatively complete path in the Corpse Collector, which they have up to Sequence 4. To think that those are interchangeable after Sequence

5… The other potion chains they have are even less complete, as some pathways only possess the first Sequence…

Similarly, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery holds the complete pathway of the Savant, and has a relatively complete pathway for the Mystery Pryer. These can also be interchanged at High Sequences…

Interesting… I wonder which pathway is interchangeable with the Seer pathway? The Apprentice or Marauder that was mentioned by the Emperor?

Hmm, there's a high possibility that the first five Sequence pathways of the Seer pathway would each provide a separate ability, and that these abilities would be combined at Sequence 4. At that stage, there should be no way to interchange it with some other potion… Klein retracted his thoughts, once again placing his attention onto the diary.

He noticed that although the two diary pages were connected, the content was not in chronological order. The dates belonged to two different periods. This could be a mistake made by whoever copied their content.

"9th April. The relationships between the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Church of the Lord of Storms, and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom are poor. They see each other as enemies. The Church of the Evernight Goddess is at odds with the Church of the God of Combat from the Feysac Empire. This can be taken advantage of. These are all facts worth considering."

"13th April. I participated in an ancient organization's gathering. I never expected them to be members of this organization as well. It sure was frightening."

"To think that the second Blasphemy Slate was in the hands of this organization. This is the first time I'm seeing this legendary item!"

"Indeed, it was hiding an unimaginable secret, hehe. Perhaps there will come a day when I will create a Blasphemy Slate unique to me. No, a set of them, with each one hiding an ultimate secret!"

*Holy f**k, Emperor, why didn't you specify the name of this ancient organization!? You're killing me! Perhaps—perhaps, Roselle had a reason, or didn't dare to write down the name of the organization, even if he was using Chinese…* Klein looked at the diary, a little uncomfortable and puzzled.

But with this page of the diary, Klein could finally confirm that Emperor Roselle had seen the second Blasphemy Slate. Furthermore, he created a set of cards after that, each card represented a pathway to godhood.

Yes, that could be the ultimate secret that matches each pathway to godhood. I wonder where that set of twenty-two cards are now? That ancient organization managed to obtain the second Blasphemy Slate… Klein's thoughts flowed quickly.

But he quickly reined in his thoughts. He shifted his gaze away from the diary and shot it towards The Hanged Man, Justice, and The Sun. He smiled and said, "Actually, you didn't need to wait for me."

"It's our honor." Alger had already reined in his dissatisfaction as he answered humbly.

Audrey thought for a moment before smiling.

"Mr. Fool, the open selection of government officials through examinations that you described previously has already garnered the support of the King and the Prime Minister. It will soon be passed by the House of Lords and the House of Commons and is predicted to be implemented early next year."

"It looks like the King and the Prime Minister still use their brains," Alger mocked out of habit.

Well, with Benson's intellect and diligence, his grammatical and accounting skills should be passable by early next year… But once it's passed by the two Houses, it will definitely be announced widely by the various newspapers. I wonder how long Benson's advantage will last? The earlier the examination, the better…

*Sigh, there's no way Benson can triumph over the elites who graduated from the various universities in such a short period of time. But he need not compete against them; the positions they're fighting for wouldn't be the same. Those people might only have their sights trained on positions such as the Cabinet secretary, or Finance secretary… *The silent Klein worried for his brother as he nodded his head with a smile.

Audrey straightened her back when she saw The Fool's affirmative nod. She said with a smile, "Mr. Hanged Man, you got me to check on something for you previously. I've received an answer. The King has been convinced by the Prime Minister and won't seek revenge on the Feysac Empire at the East Balam Shore for the time being. I think you can now give me the extra payment that you promised me."

Alger thought for a few seconds before saying, "Miss Justice, thank you for your answer. This eases my concerns over certain things. What kind of extra payment do you want? I'll consider it if it's within reason."

Audrey smiled, obviously prepared.

"Clues to the Psychology Alchemists, or clues to the main ingredients of the potion Telepathist. Of course, that can wait until after The Sun hands the formula over to me."

"No problem," Alger said without hesitation.

Two seats away from The Hanged Man, Derrick Berg couldn't understand a single word. He was very confused, feeling that he only understood a few terms, but couldn't string them together to provide any logical sense.

A method of selecting officials through examination? A King and Prime Minister, House of Lords, House of Commons, East Balam Shore, Feysac Empire, Psychology Alchemists? He understood none of that.

Feysac, the root of the word came from Jotun. What connection did it have with the fallen Giant King's imperial household? Derrick looked at Justice and The Hanged Man, suddenly having the feeling that they might not come from the same world.

Could there be another city-state, or one that had formed a nation, somewhere far away from the City of Silver in the cursed lands? Derrick remained silent and listened on. He had a faint understanding of why the mysterious Fool mentioned that he might not be able to receive the monetary compensation Justice was going to give him.

To be able to gather people this far away from each other, disregarding the terrifying monsters hiding in the darkness of the cursed lands, The Fool might really be a god, an ancient god… he thought.

After accomplishing everything that she set out to do, Audrey wanted to become a silent observer, but she suddenly remembered something. She spoke in a hurry, "I recently came into contact with a Beyonder circle and found out about a powerful person named Mr. A. Mr. Fool, Mr. Hanged Man, Mr. Sun, do you know of this person's background and identity?"

I don't even know what you're talking about… Derrick maintained his silence.

Mr. A? I only know a Mr. Z… With such a similar code name, could he also be from the Aurora Order? Klein made a guess, but didn't give an answer.

He had to maintain his image and try not to give answers he wasn't confident in. If he had to, he would give a vague description just like a charlatan.

Alger looked at The Fool and found him calm and unchanging. It was hard to read his true thoughts. Thus, he said in a deliberative tone, "The Aurora Order is at odds with the Church of the Lord of Storms, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, so members of these Churches understand the Aurora Order more than any other organization. And I happen to know something about them."

You need not explain, I know that you come under the Lord of Storms. Of course, you could be a whistleblower… But why would there be hatred between the Aurora Order and the three ancient Churches? Klein smiled but didn't speak. He looked calmly at The Hanged Man.

Alger knew that he couldn't hide his Sequence pathway from The Fool, but didn't pay too much attention to it and continued.

"The Aurora Order has five Saints and twenty-two Oracles. These Oracles use the alphabet as their code names, from Mr. A to Mr. X. They are Beyonders, with the weakest being Sequence 7 and the strongest Sequence 5. They are all adept at hiding themselves. Should a Oracle die, a new Oracle will take their place."

"I cannot guarantee that the Mr. A you spoke of is the Mr. A from the Aurora Order, but there is a good possibility. As for the details of the Aurora Order, I have mentioned that to you before."

Audrey nodded, becoming even more cautious of Mr. A.

She said, feeling a little pinch in her heart, "Thank you for your answer, Mr. Hanged Man. You need not make a payment anymore."

"No, I wish to ask for your help with the answer just now, as well as provide extra compensation," Alger said with a deep voice.

"What help?" Audrey asked curiously.

Alger thought for a few seconds before saying, "I received intelligence that the pirate Qilangos, codenamed Rear Admiral Hurricane, has secretly gone onshore and infiltrated Backlund. I don't know what he's up to, but I hope that you can help me locate his whereabouts. As for whatever happens afterwards, you need not put yourself in danger."

"Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos? One of the seven great admiral pirates?" Audrey widened her eyes, almost unable to maintain her Spectator state.

What was the thing she wanted to do the most after she became a Beyonder? It was, of course, to interact with the people that only existed in the fables of the nobles!

"Yes, he's a Sequence 6 Beyonder of the path of the Sailor, a Wind-blessed. He also has a miraculous item that could be classified as a Sealed Artifact. He's quite crafty and cruel. Don't attempt to deal with him," Alger introduced seriously.

He suddenly turned to Klein.

"Mr. Fool, can I get your adorer to assist me at the critical moment? I would pay a price that interests you."

The only adorer I have is myself… Klein lampooned to ease his emotions as he smiled.

"That is built on the premise that my adorer happens to be in Backlund."

"Alright." Alger retracted his gaze, a little disappointed, but also a little expectant.

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CHAPTER 146
CREEPING HUNGER

"What's so special about Qilangos's magical item?" Audrey asked slightly confidently.

She considered it carefully and suddenly realized that she had a decent ability to locate people in Backlund.

Firstly, her father was one of the most wealthy, connected, and reputable nobles, while she was quite popular amongst the younger generation too. Hence, in the upper-middle class of the society, she had quite a few resources to take advantage of.

Secondly, the two Beyonders that she knew had their own circles as well. Apprentice Fors was originally a clinical doctor, and was now an author. She knew quite a number of people in the literary world and publishing industry, as well as among the middle-class doctors.

Arbiter Xio Derecha had helped many middle-lower class people to coordinate and mediate disputes over a long period of time. She was also quite famous in East Backlund borough among the working class and mafia. She had a lot of hidden channels.

Plus, considering the Beyonders that they knew and their circles of influence, their ability to look for a person wasn't to be belittled.

Towards Justice's question, Alger answered almost straightaway without hesitation or thought.

"No one knows the real name of the magical item, but the people who have come into contact with it call it the 'Creeping Hunger.' Qilangos uses a living person's soul and flesh to satisfy it every other day. Otherwise, it would consume its owner as a replacement."

"This could be one of the most important clues to seek out Qilangos," Audrey said, creasing her eyebrows.

She felt utter discomfort and extreme hatred towards any evil item that desired a living human's fresh blood and soul.

"Yes, but in a big city with at least five million people, a few vagrants going missing wouldn't be noticed," Alger reminded her. "Ever since he got his hands on the Creeping Hunger, Qilangos has been very difficult to deal with."

"He was originally a Wind-blessed. He possesses great Beyonder power in domains related to water, wind, and the weather. But, later on, people realized that he could drive his targets crazy, enter the dreams of others, summon light to purify a dead soul, sing to strengthen himself, and change his appearance… There's almost nothing that he can't do," Alger described in detail. "We suspect that those are all effects that came from the magical item, Creeping Hunger…"

Before he finished sharing, Derrick Berg, who had been listening quietly, suddenly blurted, "Shepherd!"

Shepherd? Sequence 5 of the Secrets Suppliant and Listener pathway? Hmm, among the six-member council in the City of Silver, there is a new elder who's a Shepherd. Sun had mentioned that she's strong enough to fight against a Sequence 4 expert, well—an evil spirit of the same grade… Klein's expression changed slightly, but it was covered by the gray fog. Justice wasn't paying any attention to him either.

"Shepherd?"

"Shepherd?"

Justice and The Hanged Man asked in unison. One sounded completely confused while the other sounded shocked, as though they had heard the title of Shepherd elsewhere before and knew something about it, but didn't understand the actual situation.

Seeing that everyone was staring at him, Derrick suddenly panicked a little. No matter how quiet, depressed, and vexed he was, he was a boy after all.

He hurriedly explained with a stammer, "What I meant was, the traits that The Hanged Man described were like the Beyonder power of the Sequence job, Shepherd. Every Shepherd can swallow another's soul into their body, including wraiths and evil spirits. They control these souls to do their bidding with a unique method, which allows them to make use of their abilities, just like a god letting his lambs out to graze.

"Hence, no one knows how many powers a Shepherd has. That depends on how many Beyonder souls they have swallowed, and that makes them very scary. They're almost like a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"However, there are people who suspect that there's a limit to the number of souls that a Shepherd can consume and let out to graze, and that the souls inside them could be replaced as well."

*So that's what being a Shepherd means… The Sequence pathway that the Aurora Order has in its control is enigmatic… No wonder they worship the True Creator, no, the Fallen Creator… *Klein was suddenly enlightened, but he didn't nod, taking on the appearance that he knew so long ago.

Meanwhile, he sighed inwardly. *Sun, you are a boy after all. This is very important information, very important insight. You could've exchanged it for valuable things, but you just revealed it all! Just like that…*

Yes, the ability demonstrated by the magical item Creeping Hunger is similar to a Sequence 5 Shepherd… I wonder if other Sealed Artifacts have

the same powers of Beyonders? I wonder which Sequence the Sealed Artifact 2-049, the Antigonus family's puppet, resembles…

After listening to Sun's explanation, Alger seemed to have sorted out the puzzle in his mind as he nodded in silence.

Audrey got even more curious and pressed, "Which Sequence pathway is Shepherd from? Which number is it?"

"The Secrets Suppliant pathway, Sequence 5." Klein seized the opportunity to answer so as to demonstrate that he knew everything.

"Secrets Suppliant… Aurora Order…" Audrey suddenly recalled Mr. A, who was a suspected Oracle of the Aurora Order, and she immediately felt heavy-hearted.

She started thinking seriously, thinking of what price she could pay in exchange for Mr. Fool to take action and rid off that disgusting fellow effortlessly. However, she couldn't think of anything that would move Mr. Fool into doing so.

As expected, a figure akin to a god wouldn't be easily moved… There aren't many things and matters that would garner their interest after all… Audrey sighed.

Putting her impulse aside, she nodded to The Sun gratefully, thanking him for giving them a new perspective on Creeping Hunger, so that they could deal with it more reasonably and efficiently.

"Mr. Hanged Man, I'm willing to accept the mission. But I can't guarantee if I can find Rear Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos." Audrey looked opposite her when she spoke.

"There's no better answer than this. Regardless of your success, as long as you try, I will definitely compensate you with things like secret information or intelligence. And if you succeed, maybe I could provide you the

Telepathist's main ingredients directly. Of course, the prerequisite is that we have to know what it is," Alger promised generously, which was a rare sight.

"Deal," Audrey pursed her lips and replied with a faint smile.

Then, Alger created Qilangos' portrait with Klein's permission and assistance.

He was one of the seven major pirate admirals. He had a distinctive broad chin, brown hair tied into a bun at the back of his head like an ancient warrior, and green eyes that seemed to hint at laughter, but were abnormally cold..

After they finished their discussion and shared their insights, Klein smiled as he announced the ending of the Gathering. He saw Justice and The Hanged Man get up swiftly from their seats and bow while The Sun mimicked their motions, only slower.

He pressed forward with his right hand and severed the connection, but he didn't leave immediately.

…

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick looked at his familiar surroundings and glanced outside at the dark sky that had flashes of lightning. He was momentarily thrown into a trance.

But he soon jolted to his senses. He searched for goatskin and a quill before writing down the Bard formula he memorized.

He looked at it several times and was finally certain that there was nothing wrong with it.

Derrick wasn't worried that possessing the Bard formula and becoming a different Beyonder would gain the suspicion of the upper echelons of the City of Silver. This was because in past exploratory expeditions, members of those elite troops would often collect some formulas, ingredients, and strange artifacts from the monsters in the abandoned and destroyed cities.

During this process, it was normal that people kept some of the loot privately. As long as it didn't involve anything too important, the captains and higher-ups would tacitly overlook it.

Over time, some formulas started going around through non-official channels within the City of Silver. Some became the foundation of strong families from generation to generation. The Things of the Dark surrounding the City of Silver were relatively fixed. Some ingredients could be obtained easily while some could only be encountered if one went far into the cursed land.

Putting aside the goatskin, Derrick recalled the mysterious Fool's instructions. Hence, in his simple bedroom, he lowered his head and simply prayed,

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog."

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

…

Jotun was a very ancient language. It came equipped with the mystical properties demanded by rituals, prayers, and spell casting; therefore, Derrick didn't need to change the incantations into ancient Hermes.

…

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

…

Klein, who was seated at the seat of honor at the long bronze table, suddenly heard prayers reverberating in his ears. He then saw the crimson star that corresponded to Sun blinking.

He didn't try to touch it, but planned to reply to him ten minutes before the next Gathering so that the City of Silver youth would make preparations to be alone.

The most important part was for him to evade the conversion of time and date, to decrease the possibility of damaging Fool's mighty image.

After he confirmed that, Klein wrapped himself up with spirituality and stimulated a descent.

Returning to his room, Klein removed the spirituality wall and took a break before he got ready to head out again.

It wasn't necessary for him to play the role of a Seer, and he didn't have to fix his trip to the Divination Club into his daily schedule. He would only visit occasionally to make some extra pocket money and fulfill his supervision as a Nighthawk.

Originally, Klein wanted to laze around through the entire afternoon, but he suddenly thought of something that he had yet to do. So, he had no choice but to gather himself up. According to his appointment, he had to pay Detective Henry a visit that day and accept the final report about the red chimney investigation.

Sigh. I've heard that the big timers are all quite busy… I still have to spare some time to go to the Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association with Benson and Melissa to look for a good maidservant… Klein unwillingly changed his shirt, put on his black tuxedo, and held his silk top hat and silver-inlaid cane before walking out the door like a gentleman.

At Besik Street, under Henry's Private Detective Company, Klein put on a mask and lowered his hat as he went across the street quickly and entered the stairway.

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CHAPTER 147
NIGHT VISITOR

In the office of the private investigator.

"Sir, your request has been completed," Detective Henry said to the gentleman in front of him with his hoarse voice. He heaved a sigh of relief. "This wasn't an easy mission, nor was it too difficult, but it used up a great deal of our resources and energy. To be honest, I'm a little regretful. I regret setting too low a price for this mission."

*No, no matter what you say, I will not pay a single penny more! *Klein emphasized in his heart. He pointed at the thick stack of documents on the coffee table and asked, "Is this the investigation report?"

"Yes." Henry pressed on the report that had at least sixty pages and sighed. "This is the most troublesome report that I've completed…"

He hadn't even finished his sentence when he saw Klein hand over four pounds in cash. His attention shifted to determining the authenticity of the notes.

"This is the remainder of the fees." Klein held the thick stack of notes.

Henry coughed.

"You sure are a gentleman that keeps to his word. Sigh. I didn't expect the investigation report to use this many pieces of paper. It was completely out of my budget."

At that moment, Klein took the thick investigation report and stood up.

He gave a slight bow and immediately made his way to the door with his cane in hand.

Detective Henry's last sentence was left stuck in his throat.

Hey, how can you expect me to pay for the paper used in the investigation report? That should be included in the fees already! Klein touched the five pounds eight soli he had left and muttered in his heart. He walked quickly onto Besik Street.

He surveyed the surroundings and confirmed that no one was paying attention to him before leaving the place. He found an opportunity to remove his mask.

Klein didn't intend to head home right away. He wanted to search for a cafe and organize the investigation report. He wanted to find the houses that had a change in tenants after divining the red chimney. He could then conduct his search before dinner.

There were many cafes in the area, but none of them met Klein's criteria. Ever since steam and machinery became the symbol of the times, more and more cafes had toned down on their decor and become something like cheap restaurants. They provided refreshments, coffee, bread, and dishes like pea and mutton stew to the busy workers. Thus, respectable ladies and gentlemen no longer went to cafes to discuss things. They no longer viewed these actions as being symbolic of their status. Various clubs started appearing and replaced cafes as a place for socializing.

After some time, Klein finally found a cafe that had a decent atmosphere.

He sat in a secluded corner and took a sip of his one-penny Southville Coffee before flipping open the investigation report.

"In Tingen City's North Borough, South Borough, East Borough, West Borough, Golden Indus, Harbor Borough, and University Borough, there are a total of 1179 buildings that have a dark red chimney… Along the

outskirts of Tingen City, there are a total of 546 buildings with the red chimney the requester described. This doesn't include buildings in towns or villages that are relatively further away despite them falling under the jurisdiction of Tingen."

"Below are the addresses and tenant records of each of those buildings. As per the request, the activities within the last three months are recorded in more detail."

…

Klein flipped through page after page, occasionally making notes on paper he brought around with a fountain pen.

Finally, when he found the type of red chimney he had seen, he realized that there was a change of tenants in twenty-five buildings.

That's not too many. I should try to finish my investigations within two days. After all, I've seen that red chimney and parts of the house in my dream. My spiritual sense would have a feeling of familiarity when I see those signs again. I'll confirm the target that way. In other words, I'm a living investigation machine… Klein nodded. He split the buildings based on their location and planned to investigate fifteen of them that day.

He didn't need to do a divination to get an answer if these investigations would prove dangerous.

Since there was a change of tenants, that would mean that the mastermind behind the coincidences had already left!

Let's hope that the new tenants know what the previous tenants look like… But since the person behind the scenes can control my fate without anyone noticing, to the point of making the coincidences feel so natural, he would definitely have a way to remove any traces he might have left behind… Sigh, I can only pray to the Goddess and hope that he left behind some sort

of clue… Klein sighed. He pumped himself up and put on his hat. He then grabbed his cane and the report before leaving the cafe.

Klein spent two soli on a rented carriage and visited fifteen buildings with the red chimneys before dinner. Unfortunately, none of the buildings was the one he saw in his dream.

*It would be quite troublesome if tomorrow's investigation yields the same result. He might still be living in the house with the red chimney even after I saw it in my divination. This could say that he is very confident and isn't afraid of my investigation; in fact, he might not even be afraid of the Tingen Nighthawks. Or perhaps, he doesn't know that he's been exposed. That would mean that the power resisting my divination was a power not belonging to him… *Klein stood in front of 2 Daffodil Street and analyzed the various possibilities.

A few minutes later, he patted down his tuxedo and pressed on his hat before taking out his key and entering the house with a smile.

He intended to prepare stewed mutton and honey glazed barbecue for Benson and Melissa that night.

…

At eleven in the evening, the siblings bade each other goodnight and returned to their respective rooms.

Klein closed the door to his room and stood before his desk. He looked outside the oriel window with the light of his gas lamp. At that moment, the streets were engulfed in darkness, with only a few street lamps illuminating the way. Stars dotted the screen that was the night sky. There were many stars, they were just not clearly visible.

"I wonder what Backlund is like, with its titles of the Land of Hope and the Capital of Capitals…" Klein muttered to himself. He extended his hand to grab his curtain, intending to draw it.

Woo!

At that moment, a sinister wind blew at him without warning. The light from his lamp turned a dark green.

Klein subconsciously took a few steps back. His occupational instincts made him tap his left molars twice. At the same time, he leaned toward the bed and tried to reach for his revolver under his pillow.

In his vision, a face suddenly protruded from the wall above the desk and under the gas lamp. It was a translucent face without any eyes or nose. All it had was a mouth!

"Do not fire." The face with a mouth spoke.

It can communicate? Klein already had his revolver in hand as he took aim.

"What do you want?" he asked in a deep voice.

The face chuckled.

"I'm Daly."

Daly? Spirit Medium Daly? The Spirit Medium Daly who was sent to the Backlund diocese? Klein raised his brows in doubt.

"Madam Daly?"

"I know that this method of visiting you is a little rude. I should've given you a warning so you could make the necessary preparations. But it isn't convenient for me to meet you right now, and so, I can only communicate with you using this little guy." The translucent face laughed.

Even though the voice is different and jarring, the manner of speech is indeed Madam Daly's style. The abilities of a Spirit Medium sure are cool…

Klein reflected wistfully. He didn't lower his revolver as he asked, "Madam, what do you want to talk about with me?"

"If I were you, I would first seal the bedroom with spirituality. Otherwise, your family members might think of you as crazy." The translucent face quipped, "Heh heh, you need not be so cautious. I came back to Tingen in secret because of Dunn's letter. You know that a Nighthawk cannot leave the area they are assigned to at will."

"The Captain's letter?" Klein didn't approach the desk. Instead, he felt for the Holy Night Powder he had in the hidden pocket of his black windbreaker.

"Dunn and I are both Beyonders that started with the Tingen Nighthawks. We have always maintained a good relationship. Last Thursday, yes, Thursday, he sent me a letter and mentioned you. He said that you emulated the maxim of a Mystery Pryer, came up with a set of rules for a Seer, and claimed that it was effective in helping you grasp your potion. From then on, you no longer hear sounds and see visions that you shouldn't. Dunn said that it was similar to what I did.

"Heh heh, are you not going to seal the room? I personally do not mind your brother and sister misunderstanding…" the translucent face said at an adequate pace.

So that's the reason… She's indeed Madam Daly… Klein heaved a sigh of relief, pushing the Holy Night Powder back into the inner pocket. He then walked to the desk and took out the silver dagger he used for rituals from the drawer.

He quickly built up a wall of spirituality before turning to the protruding face.

"Madam Daly, what else did the Captain talk about in the letter?"

"He only expressed his own confusion and said that he seemed to understand something*—*yet, he couldn't describe it clearly. He hoped to get my opinion on the matter," Daly said with the help of the face without eyes. "And when I read the letter this morning, I knew that you aren't as clueless as you pretend to be. Heh heh, Mr. Moretti, I think that you have deduced the 'acting method!'"

"That's the reason you came looking for me?" Klein neither confirmed nor denied her statement.

Daly clearly knows about the "acting method"… He calmly made the judgment.

Daly's translucent face revealed a slight smile.

"Yes."

"I believe that we should be honest with each other. I know that you have deduced the acting method, and you also know that I grasp the 'acting method' as well. Sigh. But what's making me unhappy is that I used nearly two years to understand it*—*yet, you've only been a Beyonder for one and a half months."

Klein fell silent for a while after hearing Daly. He then smiled honestly.

"That's because I have you as my role model."

He wanted to say that he was "standing on the shoulders of giants," but ultimately decided not to give the Emperor Roselle a chance to appear in the conversation.

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CHAPTER 148
MESSENGER

Klein's reply made Daly chuckle. The translucent face with only a mouth said, "Even though you found inspiration through the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and confirmed your theories through my experience and performance, it only took you a month to understand the 'acting method' and come up with your own Seer principle. That shows that you possess outstanding wisdom and an open mind."

Klein didn't engage in the topic which made him guilty, but instead asked in response, "Madam, do the higher-ups in the church know about this so-called 'acting method?'"

"No doubt, they understand it very clearly. I once read through the historical information in the church and searched through stories of people ignoring the norms and advancing quickly. I realized that there were more than a few Nighthawks and bishops who have done so, I'm not the most unique one either. But their ending…" Daly intentionally paused, and she suddenly sounded heavy-hearted.

"What kind of ending did they have?" Klein asked, feeling a tug at his heartstrings.

Could it be that the Church of the Evernight Goddess views the "acting method" as the seduction of some devil or evil god?

The translucent face suddenly laughed. "Their endings were rather great. Besides the few who lost control or were sacrificed in Beyonder incidents, the rest of them have at least become archbishops or high-ranking deacons. Among them, there are also experts that have successfully become High-

Sequence Beyonders. In the Church of the Goddess, Sequence 4's and Sequence 3's are called Saints, while Sequence 2's and Sequence 1's are called Grounded Angels. Of course, every angel was once a Saint."

… *Madam Daly, you deliberately tried to scare me earlier…* the corner of Klein's lips twitched before he asked, without hiding his suspicions, "Since the Church has mastered the 'acting method,' why didn't they just tell every Nighthawk? Although it wouldn't prevent every Nighthawk from losing control, it would definitely lower the probability and reduce unnecessary losses."

A sense of loss appeared on the translucent face. "I have no idea why either. They told me that when I become an archbishop or high-ranking deacon, I'll be able to know the secret. I came here today because I hope that you can tell Dunn about the 'acting method' more clearly before you hand in your special request."

Klein wasn't stupid enough to ask why she couldn't do that herself; instead, he said thoughtfully, "Once noticed by the Church, one has to swear not to tell anyone about the 'acting method?'"

"Yes, you must do it before the Goddess's holy items and swear upon Her name. That holds enough binding force. Trust me, you definitely don't want to know the outcome of a violation. I can only talk about it with people who have mastered the 'acting method,' like you. Your body language already gave me the answer before you replied; that's why I dared to say the term." Daly made the creepy face sigh.

She paused for a moment before saying, "I only faintly grasped the essence of 'acting' back then and digested the potion very quickly. Yes, among the higher-ups in the Church, using the term 'digesting' to describe the control of the potion is very aptly worded. Anyway, before I made the pledge and found out about the 'acting method,' I had no clear understanding of it, so I couldn't accurately explain it to Dunn and the others.

"I gave up at first. I never thought that I would meet you, an eccentric wonder that could clearly understand the 'acting method' before handing in a special application—no, a genius."

So that's how you see me, Madam… the corner of Klein's mouth twitched before he solemnly promised, "I originally intended to remind Captain about the existence of the 'acting method' through my special application. With your explanation, I don't have to worry further."

"Very well, you're such a kind lad." Daly sounded relaxed.

*Madam, you're only about two to three years older than me… *Klein inwardly pointed out the error in her words.

Without him speaking any further, the translucent creepy face continued, "If you have any problems or anything that you require assistance with, you can write a letter to me. Wait for me, heh heh. When I become an Archbishop or a high-ranking deacon which allows me to understand why the Church hides the 'acting method,' I'll give you a hint whether if it's a good or bad thing.

Klein was suddenly energized, and he asked without hesitation, "Madam, what's your address?"

To him, the more help he got, the merrier. Plus, she was a pretty strong Spirit Medium!

Seeing that Klein didn't oppose the idea at all, Daly remained silent for a while before she laughed.

"Our communication shouldn't go through the post office, as we would be using normal letters. That's very dangerous.

"I'll teach you a relatively easy ritualistic magic. You can use it to summon a special spirit, one that belongs to me. Pass the letter to it, and it'll send it precisely to me. It wouldn't be faster than a telegram, but it's faster than a

steam locomotive. If you were to send a message at noon, I would receive the message in Backlund that same night."

Klein listened to her with his full attention. He nodded faintly. "A very pragmatic ritualistic magic."

Daly chuckled.

"The uniqueness of the ritualistic magic is to pray to yourself. Obtaining power from your own spirituality, without going through a god. Hence, it's quite secretive, but it isn't very powerful.

"… First, you select a herb and essential oil in the corresponding domain. This is no different than normal ritualistic magic. However, you only need the candle that represents yourself. Then, regarding the spell, there are three parts. The first part is 'I.' Shout 'I' in either ancient Hermes, Jotun, Dragonish, or Elvish. The second part is 'I summon in my name.' That part can be said in Hermes. The third part is the exact description of the summoning object. For instance, you would use this in the future: 'the spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the higher-dimensional creature that a human orders, the messenger that belongs to Daly Simone."

*Higher-dimensional? In mysticism, this is normally referred to as the spirit world… *Klein memorized as he analyzed the ritual procedure.

In that aspect, he could barely be considered an expert.

*The benefit of this kind of ritualistic magic is that it avoids calling upon a god but relies purely on a person's power. It achieves various magical effects without the constraints imposed by a god's specialized domain. The problem lies in the strength of a person. A weak result for the weak, and a strong result for the strong… *Klein felt that he had once again obtained new mysticism knowledge that he would've never come into contact with at his current Sequence.

Daly repeated the description a few times and emphasized solemnly, "Remember, don't change the actual description of the summoning object, or the ritual could easily attract a terrifying monster."

"Okay." Klein nodded honestly.

At the same time, he suddenly thought of something.

If I were to change the description of the summoning object to "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck," what would be summoned?

Would it be utterly useless, or would the gray fog suddenly descend, or would I need to respond in that mysterious space?

Would this help me in stirring more power from the world above the gray fog?

Would it cause a terrifying chain effect?

Klein still felt traces of the fear after his experimentation with the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. In the end, he followed his intent and planned to divine above the gray fog before deciding whether he should make the attempt or not.

He contemplated and asked out of interest, "Madam, if one were to strictly practice the 'acting method,' how long does it take to go from Sequence 8 to Sequence 7, and how long from Sequence 7 to Sequence 6?"

"According to the information that I've read, it varies from three months to two years for Sequence 8 to Sequence 7. It depends on whether you can grasp the core spirit and corresponding principle during the 'acting' process. From Sequence 7 to Sequence 6, it varies from half a year to three years; likewise for Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. As for Sequence 5 to Sequence 4, three to twenty years…" Daly described roughly.

Klein suddenly smiled.

"So Madam, are you already at Sequence 6?"

He heard from Dunn that Daly used a year's time from Sequence 9 Corpse Collector to Sequence 8 Gravedigger. Then, from Gravedigger to Sequence 7 Spirit Medium, she used another year. She had been a Beyonder for five years. In other words, Daly was at the Spirit Medium stage for about three years.

"Yes, that's the reason why I was transferred to Backlund diocese," the creepy translucent face answered frankly. "My current occupation is a Spirit Guide. However, I prefer the name Spirit Medium. Alright, this little guy is getting tired. I have to go. Under such circumstances, I won't be saying 'may the Goddess bless you.'"

"Sweet dreams." Klein pressed his chest, smiled, and bowed.

"No, there won't be any sweet dreams tonight. I have to rush back to Backlund. This isn't a happy experience, it's like having a relationship with someone you don't like…" Daly's voice grew softer, and the translucent face with no eyes or nose slowly shrank back into the wall without leaving behind any traces.

The gas lamp light suddenly became bright and the gloominess vanished into thin air.

Klein, who had his Spirit Vision activated the entire time, watched the changes in a daze. It took him a while to snap back to reality.

"Spirit Medium—no, Spirit Guide is very impressive. It can actually conjure a 'messenger.' I wonder what's the specialty of my Sequence 7 and Sequence 6?" he muttered to himself. Then, he quickly dispelled the spiritual wall, switched off the gas lamp in his bedroom, and silently lay down in the darkness.

He didn't plan to head to the world above the gray fog that night, just in case Daly suddenly returned and said Dunn Smith's classic words, "Oh yeah, I forgot one thing."

When that happens, I wouldn't even be able to silence her with death!

…

On the second day, Klein arrived at the Blackthorn Security Company three minutes early.

"Good morning, Klein. The new clerk is here!" Rozanne greeted with a splendid smile.

Klein felt sincerely happy for her.

"Congratulations, Rozanne. The Goddess heard your prayers."

"My skin shall be back to perfect condition!" Rozanne nodded, her eyes beaming with joy.

After they chatted for a while, Klein walked through the partition and knocked on the door to the Captain's office.

"Please come in." Dunn's mellow voice sounded.

Klein pushed open the door to enter. He saw his Captain sit up instinctively as his gray eyes turned dark. It was as though he was prepared for trouble.

Ahem. Klein cleared his throat, set aside his hat and cane, then sat down. "Captain, I have something that I'd like to report."

"What is it?" Dunn asked in a deep voice, his arms crossed.

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CHAPTER 149
DIRECT HINT

Klein looked at the serious Dunn Smith and smiled suddenly.

"Captain, I understood something yesterday."

"And what is that?" Dunn repeated the question in a serious tone. He leaned back and unfolded his crossed arms.

Klein recalled the script that he had prepared.

"As I was concluding my past experiences, I realized that the names of Sequence potions encompass a whole set of principles that can help us gain control over them, a set of principles that allow us to avoid the negative impacts. When we're doing things according to these set of principles, we seem to become a member of the corresponding job.

"Similarly, these sets of principles are hidden. They aren't made known to you directly. All we can do is make conclusions from the corresponding job bit by bit, then adjust our understanding based on the different feedback we receive.

"Thus, when I became a real Seer at the Divination Club and obtained my set of principles for the Seer, the auditory and visual illusions that plagued me just vanished.

"That is what I understood."

After finishing his narration, Klein heaved a sigh to himself. He said everything he needed to say, other than explicitly mentioning the term

'acting.'

Sigh, let's hope that the Captain doesn't tell the Church that I've already developed such ideas when he is asked. That would place much more attention on me… There's also the factor of the relationship between the Seer pathway and the Antigonus family. That might cause trouble eventually. But the Captain has also experienced all kinds of situations, and he's an experienced and smart person. Once he understands the "acting method," he'll definitely notice that the Church is hiding relevant information. He'll know what he should say and what he shouldn't… Klein had many complicated thoughts.

But he quickly made a decision and had a plan.

If the Captain was still unable to understand the "acting method" or sense of the cover-up by the Church, then I'll tell him straight up before submitting the special application!

*Yes, I'll probe him first and determine what he knows… *

Dunn listened to Klein's description in silence, his gray eyes becoming even deeper.

He was silent for nearly twenty seconds as he rubbed his temples before he picked up his pipe and took a whiff.

After sniffing it, he took out a matchbox, seemingly forgetting about the rules of the Nighthawks.

The white smoke billowed into the air as Dunn closed his eyes, seemingly appreciating the smell of tobacco.

After a while, he opened his eyes and smiled at Klein.

"I'm sorry, I forgot that you don't smoke."

"Smoking is bad for your health," Klein answered in all seriousness.

Dunn thought with his pipe in his hand.

"I seem to have understood something too."

No Captain, you don't understand anything! Just don't loiter in my dreams too often! Klein didn't speak and instead, gave a friendly smile.

"Perhaps it won't be too long before you submit the special application to me…" Dunn said to Klein, half-jokingly as he took a deep puff of the mint and tobacco.

Can I submit it tomorrow? Klein replied inwardly. He took out his pocket watch and looked at the time.

"Captain, I have be at Old Neil's. Today's mysticism lessons are starting soon."

"Alright." Dunn watched Klein leave, his pipe still in his hand.

After closing the door to the Captain's office, Klein made his way towards the steps leading to the basement in high spirits. He saw two strangers, a male and a female, when he walked past the clerk's office.

*The new clerks… *Klein's mind wondered before he added inwardly, *In another two days, definitely within this week, I'll submit my application to Captain!*

Then I'll pass a series of inspections and become a Sequence 8 Clown!

…

Along the silent underground passage, Klein turned to the armory and pushed the guard room door open.

"What happened to you?" Klein had a shock when he saw Old Neil.

Old Neil looked dispirited, his face was pale. He yawned constantly as he said, "I've been a little constipated lately. I tried ritualistic magic that can solve such problems last night. In the end… I didn't sleep well the entire night. I had to head to the bathroom multiple times, and in the end, and I nearly fell asleep on the toilet bowl."

Well, the problem of constipation has been solved… Klein nearly laughed, seeing that it wasn't a serious problem.

But he controlled himself. He asked, "Are you feeling better now?"

At the same time, his concern made him tap his left molar twice. He used his Spirit Vision to observe the aura of Old Neil's health.

There are some darkness and impurities in the digestive system's yellow and the kidney's orange colors, but it's nothing too serious and is within an acceptable range… Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

"I'm fine now. I got some medicine for the diarrhea from Frye." Old Neil yawned like a drug addict. "Self-study for today's supernatural lesson. There's only two or three days left of content anyway."

"Alright," Klein responded politely. "I could help you guard the armory and study here. How about you go rest in the break room?"

Old Neil immediately straightened his back, his eyes glimmering as he answered, "Lad, you surely are the kindest Nighthawk, second to Frye!

"I'll hand the armory over to you!"

He picked up the cushion he had placed on his knees and rushed out of the guard room like a typhoon, leaving Klein the only person there, dazed.

…

The Blackthorn Security Company accepted an extra mission in the morning. The task involved escorting a rich merchant to the harbor for a deal. Leonard and Kenley completed it easily, earning themselves some extra pay, much to the envy of Klein.

He went about his day, learning about mysticism, practicing his shooting, and getting tortured by Instructor Gawain who seemed to have been agitated by something.

Huff, huff… Klein gasped for air. He only regained the ability to take a shower and change after quite some time.

He continued toiling after leaving Gawain's house. He spent two soli on a carriage and investigated the other ten houses with red chimneys.

Klein's expression became very grave when the last house with the red chimney left his field of vision.

The house with the red chimney that I saw in my divination isn't in the list of houses with a recent change in tenants… If that's the case, this has just become troublesome. I wonder how much time I would need to investigate about 1600 houses… Sigh. I can't ask for any help to do something like this. After all, only I would have the sense of familiarity from my spirituality when I see the target…

Don't be discouraged, don't give up. I'll continue the investigation whenever I have free time. I'll try to complete it within three months, no—two months! Who knows, the target might be found in tomorrow's investigation!

And, I'll organize the material when I get back and plan a route according to the distance of the sectors!

Klein motivated himself, banishing his feelings of depression.

Now that he had made a decision, he planned to instruct the driver to turn toward Daffodil Street. However, he suddenly realized that he was

somewhere close to where Mr. Azik stayed.

Before Mr. Azik went for his holiday, he did write to tell me that he would be back sometime this week, but he didn't specify the exact date. Since it's on the way, I'll leave a note for him. Also, I rented this carriage for an hour with two soli, and the time's almost up anyway. I'll just stop at Mr. Azik's house, then take a public carriage back… Klein quickly made a decision.

Four minutes later, he alighted from the carriage and arrived outside Mr. Azik's house.

The houses here were obviously of higher quality than those at Daffodil Street, but not as good as those on Howes Street. There was a patch of grass in front of the house, and a small garden in the back.

Ding! Ding! Ding!

Klein pulled on the rope outside the door and sounded the bell within the house.

A few moments later, he heard footsteps from inside before the door swung open.

Azik's mild facial features and bronze skin appeared before Klein. Since he was at home, he was only dressed in a simple white shirt, a brown vest, and matching pants.

"Klein? I was just about to write to you," Azik greeted enthusiastically. "I just arrived home last night."

Klein stared at the small mole near Azik's right ear.

"Mr. Azik, I found a clue to your past."

"Really?" Azik instantly became excited. The sadness he had in his eyes dulled.

"Let's talk inside." Klein looked around.

Azik quickly nodded. He moved to the side and allowed Klein entry.

He locked the door and guided Klein to the living room on the first floor. They sat on the soft sofa.

"What clues did you find?" he asked impatiently.

Having not expected to meet Mr. Azik today, Klein organized his words.

"I received a mission recently and had to deal with a wraith in Lamud Town."

"Lamud…" Azik repeated the term softly, his eyebrows creasing.

Klein observed his expression and slowed down his tone.

"In the process of dealing with the wraith, we discovered something and thus conducted an investigation within the town…

"A resident of the town was in possession of a portrait of the first Baron Lamud which he tried to sell me. I asked to view the portrait out of curiosity and discovered that the person drawn had facial features that resembled yours, other than the hair. He even had the same mole near the ear, similar position, similar size.

"Under my interrogation, the man told me that the portrait was about forty years old, but the person in the portrait definitely came from the abandoned castle. It was a replica of the ancient portrait excavated from the castle.

"You should know that people like us with unique abilities can more or less tell if somebody is lying. This told me that the man wasn't lying."

Azik leaned forward as he listened to Klein. He crossed his arms and remained silent for a while.

Five minutes later, he exhaled.

"Your description didn't make me recall anything. Perhaps, I should visit the abandoned castle myself. Can you take me there?"

"That would be my honor," Klein replied. "But I have to head home first. I don't want my siblings to worry."

"No problem." Azik stood up.

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CHAPTER 150
AZIK'S DISCOVERY

2 Daffodil Street. Klein nodded at Azik and briskly walked to the door of his house, fished out his keys, and opened the door.

Melissa was already home, so she heard the click of the door lock and quickly came out of the kitchen and into the living room.

Upon seeing Klein, she said with eyes beaming with joy, "I bought groceries. There's chicken, potatoes, onions, fish, turnips, and peas. I even bought a small jar of honey."

Sis, are you also getting used to the occasional luxury? Klein chuckled.

"You'll have to prepare dinner tonight. Count me out for I'll be out of town. I might not return until dawn. Yea, I'm doing a favor for Mr. Azik, a teacher from the Khoy University's Department of History."

As he spoke, he turned sideways and pointed at the carriage that was waiting outside.

Melissa's lips opened and closed twice, before she pursed them and said, "Alright."

Klein bade his sister farewell and left. He got into the rented carriage that Azik had hired and traveled two hours and forty minutes to Lamud Town.

It was almost nine at that point. The sky was dark, and they could only rely on the crimson moonlight and the twinkling starlight that penetrated the clouds to illuminate the areas without street lamps.

After he instructed the driver to wait in town, Klein led Azik towards the ancient abandoned castle.

As they walked, he realized that Azik was walking faster, to the point of him having to break out into a small jog to keep up. In the end, it was Azik who led the way.

Klein wanted to say something initially, but cleverly swallowed his words when he saw Azik's solemn expression and tightly pursed lips.

With such speed, they quickly arrived at the ancient castle.

The castle which was almost a wreckage extended itself in all four directions while its spire looked desolate, wild, eerie, and dark.

Azik looked at the ancient castle and slowed down his footsteps.

He stopped there and his gaze looked profound but lost, as though he was hovering between dreams and reality.

Suddenly, he groaned in pain, lifting his hand to pinch his forehead while his muscles looked distorted with agony.

"Mr. Azik, are you okay?" Klein asked carefully as he activated his Spirit Vision.

When they were onboard the hired carriage, making their way from Daffodil Street to Lamud Town, he had done a quick divination by flipping a coin to see if there would be any danger on their trip.

But he believed that divination wasn't all-powerful, and he kept his guard up to prevent any misinterpretation on his part. Plus, Azik was quite mysterious. No one knew about his past, and it was uncertain how he would respond if he were to be stimulated by an encounter with his past. Caution and worry had accompanied Klein throughout the trip.

Azik didn't reply immediately but took another two steps forward with a pained expression. He relaxed the hand that was holding his forehead. He then pointed forward with a dreamy tone.

"I've seen this ancient castle before in my dream.

"Back then, it was still complete with a robust outer wall and a high spire.

"I remember that there was a stable there, a water well there, and a barracks there. Over there was a garden that was used to plant potatoes and sweet potatoes…

"I remember there was a training field. My child, he was a boy. He was only about seven or eight years old, but he enjoyed running around while dragging a broadsword that was taller than him. He said that he wanted to become a knight when he grows up…

"My wife always complained about it being too gloomy in the castle. She liked the sunlight, the warmth…"

…

Klein looked at the color of his energy field, and what the man said made his scalp tingle. He was also slightly touched, as though he was experiencing a paranormal story himself.

The ancient castle is really related to Mr. Azik… Could he really be the first generation Baron Lamud, a transcendental creature that has lived for fourteen hundred years? Is he a human or an evil spirit? No way, there are no such things as evil spirits running around under broad daylight and getting involved with the Nighthawks… Klein couldn't help with his thoughts and allowed them to clash against each other to ignite more ideas.

Just then, Azik stopped muttering and took huge strides through the main gate.

He walked all the way into the castle without Klein's guidance. He found the hidden gear with obvious familiarity and opened the secret door to enter the basement.

Gripping his cane tightly, Klein followed behind Azik. They walked down along the stairs and returned to the place where there was a coffin.

Unlike the previous time, the coffin was closed and the warm and pure feeling was gone.

*The coffin is closed… It must've been Frye. It's his work ethic as a Corpse Collector… *Klein nodded thoughtfully and watched the conflicted Azik walk in front of the coffin with his Spirit Vision.

Azik extended his hands to push the coffin lid until there was a gap.

He gazed at the skeleton without a skull for a long time, and he suddenly wailed in pain and sorrow.

Azik lurched backwards with heavy footsteps. He staggered and fell against the wall before Klein managed to respond.

He covered his face with his hands and sat there dispirited. The surroundings suddenly became even darker.

Klein quickened his pace and extended his hands, but he retracted them again, not daring to disturb the man.

Just then, his spiritual perception told him that the current Mr. Azik was very scary, so scary that the basement grew gloomy and terrifying.

Klein slowly moved closer to the stairs.

He trusted Mr. Azik's character, but he was afraid that the man would lose control.

In such an uneasy situation, he waited for a few more minutes. Then, he finally saw Azik lower his hands and stand up slowly.

Mr. Azik seems to have changed… This is what my spiritual perception tell me… But in my Spirit Vision, his aura colors don't have any obvious changes. His emotions are in low spirits, depressed and pained as before… Klein made a quick judgment and felt that Azik had become gloomier and more imposing.

"I recalled something, but it's very minor." Azik spoke with an emotionless tone.

Then, he looked around and said,

"I sense the power that made your fate disharmonious."

"Huh?" Klein was stunned. Pleasantly surprised, he asked in reply, "Can you trace the source?"

The person behind the scene who stayed in the red chimney house created coincidences in secret and came to Lamud's ancient castle to take away the black armored knight's head?

What is he trying to do? What is his true intention?

"It's been too long, but, I'd like to try." There seemed to be a volcano that was close to erupting within Azik's deep voice.

"How?" Klein asked curiously.

Azik walked before the coffin and gazed upon the skeleton inside it.

"He took my child's skull. I want to find him through a blood connection."

Your child? Mr. Azik, are you sure the black armored knight is your child? So you really are an antique… You really lost your memory after such a

long time? This is the price you have to pay in order to obtain such longevity? Klein took a silent breath, feeling the odd sensation of interacting with a legendary creature.

Then, Azik extended his right hand and suddenly cut his index finger with his thumbnail.

A drop of fresh red blood accurately dripped onto the white skeleton.

It quickly seeped into the skeleton, and the entire skeleton suddenly turned blood-red.

Wah! Wah! Wah! Klein suddenly heard the sound of a baby crying and felt that there was someone staring at him from behind.

He drew his revolver and pointed behind him before turning around slowly. However, there was nothing in sight. Nothing existed behind him.

Even the stairway that connected to the ground floor was gone!

Wah! Wah!

The sound of a baby crying drilled into Klein's ears, and when he looked towards the coffin again, he was shocked to see that there were many shapeless and distorted faces rising amidst billowing black fog. Then, they manifested a strange door.

Creak!

The illusory door opened and palish-white arms extended out, one after another, but they vanished into the black fog before Azik.

Through the crack that the door opened, Klein saw a white skull. It was thrown underneath a brown tree and reduced to powder as a result of the elements.

Creak!

Countless palish-white arms were sliced off by the door that suddenly slammed shut as they fell onto the ground.

Then, Klein heard a long sigh, Mr. Azik's heavy sigh, a sigh that seemed to have a rich history behind it.

Along with the sigh, the black fog dispersed and the sound of a baby crying ceased. Everything returned to its original state, except for the accentuated chill.

Klein clenched his chattering teeth and looked into the coffin. He saw that the red skeleton had returned to its original, crystal-clear white.

"I'm sorry. I couldn't find him…" Azik said in a deep voice, his back to Klein.

At the same time, he closed the coffin.

"It's not surprising that we couldn't find him. It would've been a surprise if we could," Klein comforted him.

Anyway, I've been disappointed many times regarding this matter… he added in his head.

Azik took another glance at the coffin before him. He turned around slowly and said, "I'll continue investigating and I hope that I can have your assistance."

"No problem. This is exactly what I wanted to do." Klein held back his urge to tell Azik about the red chimney.

Because it was useless to bring it up. He could only rely on himself to confirm his target.

However, that solved one of his major problems, which was how he should involve the Nighthawks after he found the red chimney house. He didn't believe that he could take out such a mysterious and scary puppet master alone.

Now, he could ask for Mr. Azik's help!

Azik widened his mouth, but didn't say anything in the end. All he did was sigh and walk towards the stairway quietly.

After leaving the basement and closing the secret door, the two of them walked along the road covered with weeds and brambles. Neither one of them spoke as they walked back from the abandoned ancient castle.

In the dark night, Azik suddenly said,

"Until this matter is resolved, I will quit my job and leave Tingen, to look for my lost past."

"Mr. Azik, did you find out what happened to you?" Klein asked, having failed to hide his curiosity.

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CHAPTER 151
KLEIN'S REQUEST

The chirping of insects and the hooting of owls reverberated along the path back to the small town. Azik looked ahead and said after a few seconds of silence, "Even though I'm not entirely sure what happened to me, I do have a rough idea.

"Perhaps—perhaps I'm someone who has lived for a very, very long time."

Mr. Azik, you have to seriously consider if you still fit the definition of "someone"… Klein thought to himself, but he didn't dare to say it out loud.

"This wilderness, this silence, often makes one weak…

"I should've paid some sort of price in exchange for this long life. I've lived since the end of the Fourth Epoch, like a wandering spirit across the continent…" Azik's voice deepened, as if he was trying to suppress his emotions. "I don't remember the past. I've forgotten about the people and things that I've sworn to remember…"

Klein poked at the weeds in front of him and said, in thought, "Mr. Azik, I have a theory regarding your situation."

"What theory?" Azik looked to the side.

"I think that there's a cycle to your memory loss. Perhaps you 'die' once every few decades, and your memories of the events before that vanishes. Then, after some time, you wake up from the darkness of your slumber and begin on a new phase of life. This way, we can explain why you would have

such varied dreams. Those are events that you came across over your several lives," Klein described his theory.

Azik slowed down his pace, as if the darkness had grabbed onto his sleeve. He looked ahead with a turbid look before saying after a while, "That is consistent with the memories that were jolted awake just now."

Memories that were jolted awake? Klein had an idea as he said immediately, "Mr. Azik, you might not have to leave Tingen to search for your lost past. You'll regain your memories slowly!"

"Why?" Azik turned his head in surprise.

Klein smiled and said, "Your memories aren't completely gone. The parts of your memory that jolted awake just now are proof of that.

"Furthermore, do you remember the moment you woke up in Backlund and discovered that you had forgotten all about the past?"

Azik nodded. "That's a nightmare that bothers me till this day."

Klein tapped downwards with his black cane and explained in detail, "Before today, I didn't think that there was a problem with that. But your description just now, together with my own conjecture, makes it feel a little weird. You had a document of identification and enough money when you woke up from your dream. You also appeared in a way that didn't startle anyone… All of that seems like it was arranged for you, allowing you to fit into society with little effort.

"Then, who made the arrangements?

"There is only one answer; the you from the past!

"The past you regained his memories and knew that you would have to usher in a new life. Thus, he prepared everything for you, trying his best to not let you attract suspicion from anyone else."

Azik stopped walking. He looked at the specks of light coming from the town, once again slipped into silence.

"Perhaps the 'parents' that I've been searching for were the past me all along…" He sighed, admitting that Klein's deduction was very plausible.

"Thus, you don't need to do anything. All you have to do is patiently wait for your memories to come back to you," Klein concluded and consoled Mr. Azik.

Azik subconsciously waved his cane before he turned still, like a sculpture carved out of marble.

After a long time, he looked into the distance and answered, "Perhaps—perhaps I'll only fully regain my memory when this life is nearing its end. I don't want to wait that long. I want to have plenty of time to understand and free myself from this destiny. So I have to be more proactive in searching for my past, to trigger my memories a little at a time. I have to get back my memories back before the time you hypothesized. Waiting would only make me repeat the cycle."

"Indeed that's the choice worth looking forward to the most." Klein didn't advise against it. Instead, he asked, "Mr. Azik, may I ask for your help in something trivial, other than finding the criminal that took the skull of your child and made my fate disharmonious?"

Azik nodded slightly.

"What do you need me to do?"

Klein organized his words and said, "I hope that you can head to a town between two and five hours away from Tingen by carriage next week, or the week after. I need you to cause a paranormal incident, something that wouldn't harm anyone. Judging from how you tried to search for the criminal using your bloodline's connection, I would think that you are fairly adept in the field of dead souls."

"No problem," Azik promised without any hesitation. He didn't ask Klein why he wanted him to do something like that.

At the same time, he had tacitly confirmed Klein's conjecture about his powers.

"Thank you. This is very important to me. Also, you can only choose a follower of the Evernight Goddess when you are picking a target. Also, don't leave any clues behind," Klein instructed.

Only through this method could the incident be relayed to the Tingen Nighthawks. Only then could he join the team on the mission and suggest using Sealed Artifact 3-0782. Only then could he extract the divine blood from the Sealed Artifact to create Flaring Sun Charms!

That was the most powerful item he could obtain at the moment.

Under the assumption that the culprit living in the house with the red chimney hasn't left Tingen, and that Klein was going to continue investigating, he had to try his best to become more powerful!

*Yes, according to the information I obtained, stealing a little of its powers wouldn't damage 3-0782. At the very most, it would only lessen the amount of time it takes to purify… This is for the safety and stability of Tingen City! *Klein inwardly tried to justify his actions.

Azik didn't care about his motives. He nodded.

"I will tell you the name of the town and the estimated time beforehand so you can prepare yourself."

Phew… Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He felt that this trip to Lamud Town wasn't a wasted trip.

Even though they only managed to peel back the outermost layer of the mysteries surrounding Mr. Azik and had much more to find out, he had at

least managed to gain the friendship of Azik, a reliable ally in his search for the culprit behind the scenes!

…

At half past eleven that night, Klein returned to 2 Daffodil Street, hungry and tired.

"To think that Mr. Azik didn't treat me to dinner… Sigh. He wouldn't have been in the mood to enjoy dinner anyway," Klein muttered as he opened the door.

The house wasn't as dark as he had anticipated. An elegant gas lamp was silently emitting its light, warmly illuminating the living room. Benson was sitting alone on the sofa with a book, draped under a bright "coat."

When he saw the door open, Benson was just about to speak when he yawned. He had no choice but to cover his mouth.

Klein closed the door and smiled, quipping, "I went to Lamud Town with Mr. Azik. There's an abandoned castle with a long history over there."

Benson was immediately enlightened as he laughed.

"A moonless night, a castle abandoned for a millennia, a cold and creepy environment, coupled with a two-man archaeological team… This is the perfect recipe for the opening of a paranormal novel."

What happened today could be classified as paranormal… Klein suddenly recalled the strange door Mr. Azik conjured and the cries of a baby. He said, a lingering fear still gripping onto him, "It did feel a bit like that back there."

Benson yawned again before shutting his book and said, "I need sleep. Ever since I began studying and reading classical literature, the quality of my sleep has become especially good."

Klein laughed to himself, suddenly recalling something Miss Justice had mentioned. He said, lowering his voice, "Benson, you know that my company has connections with the Awwa County Police. I recently heard news from Backlund that the King, Prime Minister, other ministers and Members of Parliament are all sick of an inefficient government. They want to push for a reform and select talents to take on positions in the government based on an open examination, just like the entrance examinations of universities."

Benson was at a loss at first, then his eyes sparkled as he asked, "An open examination?"

"Yes. As long as you pass the examination, you could become a civil servant in one of the branches of the government. My guess, yes—my guess is that the contents of the examination will be modeled after the entrance exams of the universities: literature, the classics, math and logic, as well as a basic understanding of the law…" Klein used this opportunity to include his opinion. He continued, "Benson, this must be kept confidential, and don't put too much hope on this. No one knows if this will be passed by the House of Lords and House of Commons or not."

"I'll keep it in mind. I understand that all I need to do is study hard." Benson smiled, then said, "I'd study hard whether this change happens or not. I'll try my best to free myself from my current circumstance and find a better job. Learning—that's the greatest difference between a human and a curly-haired baboon."

No, research suggests that baboons have decent IQ levels, and a certain level of learning abilities… Klein lampooned silently and looked on as Benson headed to the second floor.

After that, he smiled and rubbed his stomach as he walked toward the kitchen.

He found the leftovers and the chicken Benson and Melissa left him especially. Klein relaxed as he started preparing his late dinner.

It was deep into the night now, and most people had already gone to bed. He was the only one still awake, breathing in the cool air with mixed aromas and making slight movements.

Everything was peaceful and serene.

…

After he was satiated, he washed the dishes and took a bath. Finally, Klein returned to his room and locked the door.

He yawned but kept himself awake. He took out the silver dagger used for rituals and sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

He wanted to divine above the gray fog whether summoning "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era" was dangerous or not!

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CHAPTER 152
NICE ATTEMPT

The gray fog filled the air in its eternally unchanging manner as the illusory crimson stars hung around him at varying distances. Klein sat inside the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant as he looked at the familiar sight before him.

After a few seconds, he looked away and made a yellowish-brown goatskin appear before him. Then, he lifted a pen to write his amended incantation for the summoning ritual.

"Light a candle to represent myself.

"Use a spiritual wall to create a holy environment.

"Drip a drop of Full Moon Essence Oil in the flame, Chamomile Pure Dew, Slumber Flower Powder, and other ingredients. (Note: There's no need to be too particular in this step because it's summoning oneself).

"Recite the incantation below.

"I! (In ancient Hermes, Jotun, Dragonese, or Elfish. It must be a deep shout)

"I summon in my name (Hermes),

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

…

After scrutinizing it three times, Klein wrote a divination statement at the bottom:

"There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world."

Phew. He let out a breath, put down the pen, took out the silver chain in his sleeve, and held it with his left hand.

The topaz pendant hung above the goatskin steadily, only a slight distance above the divination statement. He reined in his thoughts and entered a Cogitation state.

"There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world.

"There will be danger if the ritual above is carried out outside of this world."

…

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein opened his eyes which were almost all black and looked at the topaz pendant which was spinning counterclockwise.

That meant a negative outcome: there would be no danger!

"I can give it a try then." Klein made the items before him disappear. He then extended his spirituality to wrap around himself and simulated the sensation of falling.

When he returned to his bedroom, due to the fact that he had sealed the entire room with a spiritual wall, Klein immediately cleared his desk and put out a mint-scented candle right in the middle.

He pressed slightly on the candle wick, rubbing it with spirituality to cause friction and ignite the candle.

Under the flickering dim light, Klein dripped the corresponding essential oils, extracts, and herb powder onto the flame.

A soothing fragrance suddenly filled the air, and the room alternated between brightness and darkness.

Taking two steps back, Klein looked at the candle that represented himself and shouted in Jotun, "I!"

Then, he switched to Hermes, "I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

Just as he finished speaking, he sensed the wavering candlelight suddenly dance vigorously and produce a vortex with the surrounding fragrance. It absorbed his spirituality at an insane rate.

"Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation…" Klein endured the discomfort brought about from having his spirituality drained as he finished reciting the incantation.

Then, he saw the candlelight stop wavering. It was tainted with a gray luster, which extended to about the size of a palm.

"I didn't summon anything… Oh right, perhaps I'll need to respond to it above the gray fog? It's really quite troublesome to summon myself…" Klein muttered, pinching his aching forehead.

He calmed himself down, then took four steps counterclockwise before arriving above the gray fog again. He saw that there was a rippling light above the seat of honor at the ancient table.

It stemmed from the strange symbol at the back of the corresponding chair. The strange symbol that was made up of a Pupil-less Eye, a symbol representing secrecy, and contorted lines that represented change.

All Klein did was extend his hand to reach for it when he immediately heard, "I! I summon in my name, The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck." Then, he saw surging spirituality combined with a rippling light that formed into an illusory yet shapeless door.

The door shook as though it wanted to be opened. Klein immediately felt inspired and strongly willed for it to be pushed open.

Almost instantly, the boundless fog and lofty palace was drawn forward. There were a few barely noticeable ripples.

The ripples surged towards the illusory yet shapeless door.

But, no matter how much Klein pushed it, the door couldn't be pushed open. Every movement resulted in dead silence.

"The Door of Summoning has yet to take shape?" Klein reined in his will and creased his eyebrows when he analyzed the reason why he had failed.

He had casually named the door "the Door of Summoning."

"Hmm, I'm lacking spirituality, so I can't form a complete Door of Summoning. When I advance to Sequence 8 Clown and pass through the initial dangerous stage, I can give it another try. Maybe it won't be a problem by then…" Klein nodded lightly and roughly understood what had happened.

This experiment gave him a confidence boost, he felt heartened as this was the first time that he received some sort of response from the mysterious space above the gray fog*—*other than the incident where he divined about Eternal Blazing Sun!

There will come a day when I'll understand all the secrets here! Klein excitedly declared in his heart. He then made a rapid descent into the boundless fog after he wrapped himself up with spirituality.

…

Klein quickly blew out the candle after he returned to his bedroom. He ended the ritual and cleaned up his study desk before he removed the spiritual wall.

A gust of wind suddenly blew as he yawned. He collapsed into the bed, covered himself with a blanket and quickly fell asleep.

In the hazy dream that followed, Klein woke up abruptly and realized that he was sitting in the living room of his home and was holding the Tingen City Honest Paper.

… *Don't tell me Captain is here again?* He was stunned at first as he looked outside the oriel window, finding humor in his exasperation.

With a creak, the door opened. Dunn walked in slowly, wearing his black windbreaker that went beyond his knees and held a cane and pipe.

He was still wearing his black top hat, and underneath it were his profound gray eyes.

Dunn came to the living room and sat on the single seat sofa. He leisurely crossed his right leg over his left.

He put aside his cane, took off his hat, and leaned backwards. He sat there quietly and looked at Klein as though he was thinking.

Captain, what are you trying to do today… Klein was dumbfounded.

In order to not expose that he knew that it was a dream, he pretended to not be affected by it and continued to read the newspaper.

One minute, two minutes, five minutes. He lifted his head to look at Dunn who sat opposite him. He found out that the Captain was still sitting there quietly and was looking at him in deep thought.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes. Klein flipped through the newspaper back and forth multiple times, looking at Dunn from the corner of his eyes, and noticed that the man was still looking at him quietly in deep thought.

Captain, you're making me very uncomfortable… Klein couldn't sit in peace. He folded the newspaper and put it aside. He nodded and smiled at Dunn. Then, he went to the kitchen to get a piece of cloth and started wiping the dining table and coffee table.

Captain, look, my dream is so simple, so ordinary, so boring. There's nothing worth observing. Hurry up and leave! Why don't you pretend to be a ghost and I'll pretend to be frightened, then you can complete your achievement as a Nightmare! He prayed in silence and lifted his head, but all he saw was Dunn's deep gray eyes that were still in deep thought.

Under such a quiet and constant gaze, Klein wiped all the furniture and cleaned his room. He was so exhausted in his dream.

What wore him out the most was Dunn Smith, who was watching him quietly in deep thought.

Klein had no idea how much time had passed while he made himself busy until he finally saw his Captain uncross his legs and stand up. Then, he took his cane, put on his hat, and walked through the door.

Klein held his breath and watched Dunn leave his house.

He couldn't help but lift his right hand to wave goodbye.

Phew… When everything returned to normal, Klein let out a breath of relief.

That really was such a nightmare! He thought to himself, too preoccupied for tears.

…

Backlund, West Backlund, Philip's Department Store.

Philip's was one of the top-end department stores in the Loen Kingdom. It only opened to nobles and wealthy people who were qualified to be members.

There was always luxurious carriages parked outside with different emblems printed on them. Not only was it a safe place for shopping, it also became a popular social venue due to the strict restriction on members.

Audrey brought her maidservant, Annie, and her golden retriever, Susie. Under the ushering of an eagerly attentive attendant, she got off the carriage and walked through the entrance.

Along the way, she saw daughters of viscounts, countesses, or maidens with parents of high social status.

She maintained her elegance and greeted them all gracefully. She communicated with different nobles on different topics. For instance, when she faced a particular countess, she would compliment the fittings of the countess's dress and when she greeted a particular baroness, she would praise the outstanding performance of the baroness's husband in the House of Lords.

Audrey hadn't been good at that previously; she was too stubborn and too arrogant. But now, she didn't even need to put in much effort to respond perfectly.

In a Spectator's eyes, most of the emotions and thoughts of the female nobles were written on their faces.

Arriving at the second floor, Audrey turned into a shop that sold ready-made dresses.

The attendant in the shop was a petite maiden. She wore a black and white dress and had shoulder-length blond hair. She was the Arbiter, Xio Derecha.

Audrey gave Susie a look without changing her facial expression. The dog understood what her owner meant immediately and ran to another counter.

Maidservant Annie went after Susie to try to drag her back.

Well done! Audrey complimented inwardly and walked next to Xio Derecha, pretending to look at the variety of dresses.

"… Why did you arrange to meet me here for?" Xio inquired with a whisper while she loudly introduced the dresses.

Her voice was tender, just like a child's.

"Where's the original attendant?" Audrey asked in reply instead of answering her.

Xio looked around and said, "I convinced her. She was happy to rest for the morning."

Audrey looked at the different styled dresses while she took out a piece of neatly folded paper from her lamb leather handbag and secretly passed it to Xio.

"Rear Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, has snuck into Backlund. This is his portrait. I hope you can find him for me. Oh, and don't alert him."

Xio received the piece of paper and unfolded it to take a quick glance. She saw that it was a lifelike portrait of a man in his thirties that had a unique broad chin.

I was once constantly praised by my art teacher… Audrey stole a glance at Xio and lifted her head.

She added, "The Kingdom offers a reward of ten thousand pounds for Qilangos. If he were to be arrested, even the person that only provided clues would definitely be awarded with a few hundred pounds."

Just as she finished her sentence, she saw Xio's eyes beam with joy, as she had expected.

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CHAPTER 153
FINAL ACT OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION

A unique wide jaw, his hair is in a bun like an ancient knight's, eyes that look at you with the intent of an icy smile… Xio Derecha was half slumped on the sofa as she scrutinized the portrait that Audrey had handed to her.

In her eyes, the man might as well have been a living, walking pile of money.

After committing the looks of the great pirate Qilangos to her memory, she proceeded to read the description written at the bottom of the page:

"Brown hair, dark green eyes.

"The portrait can only be used as a general reference as the target possesses the ability to transform into another person. It is unknown how long he can maintain the transformation."

The portrait can only be used as a reference… The target possesses the ability to transform into another person… Only as a reference, transform into another person… Then why did I spend so much time memorizing his facial features? Xio wore a dazed look, as if it was the first time she had witnessed the evil intentions the world had for her.

She looked up and saw Fors Wall slumped languidly in a sofa across from her. She seemed to be muttering to herself, "There's no way to look for this person. We don't know what he looks like. All we know is that he's not from

Backlund. There are far too many foreigners who come into Backlund every day."

Fors attempted to sit up, but failed even after three tries.

"I'm only an Apprentice, not an Arbiter…" She pouted as she placed her hand on the armrest of the sofa, successfully pulling herself up into a sitting position.

"Does that lady think that we are prophets?" Fors jested.

Xio was about to answer when she realized that there were still footnotes she hadn't gone through yet.

She recited them out softly, "The suggested ways of searching are as follows:

"1. Qilangos has an evil object with him. It needs to devour the flesh, blood, and soul of a living person every other day. You can consider looking for missing vagrants.

"2. Search for Qilangos's information thoroughly and build a profile of his unique hobbies and behaviors.

"3. A person's facial features might change, but as long as he hasn't received any special training, he will often act like himself, such as the things he prefers to eat, his gait, actions he's used to performing, and many other details."

Fors nodded as she listened.

"Miss Audrey isn't the innocent, naive teen that the rumors about her suggest. She has a meticulous heart and a calm sense of observation."

"Is that so?" Xio asked, doubtful. She didn't expect an answer as she changed the topic by suggesting, "I'll be in charge of gathering the

information. Can you consolidate that pile of gold pound's, no—that admiral's hobbies and unique traits?"

Fors opened her eyes wide open and shook the steel box containing her cigarettes.

"How can you bear to do this? How can you bear to make a dainty, sensitive author do consolidation, analysis, and deduction?"

Xio shot her good friend a glance as she exuded an air of authority without realizing it.

"There's an interesting paragraph on deduction in your Stormwind Mountain Villa."

Fors pulled her shoulders back and lowered her head. She looked at the coffee table as she said, "Do you know how much of my hair I pulled out, how much sleep I lost, just for that paragraph?"

She quickly lifted her head and looked at Xio Derecha, then lowered her head once again and grumbled, "Life is short. There are too many things that we need to do, why must we waste our time on such uninteresting, menial tasks?"

*That's very reasonable… *Xio nearly nodded in agreement. She fought hard to keep her authority as an Arbiter.

"Then do you have any other ways to solve this problem?" She suppressed her voice, making her childlike voice sound deeper.

Fors thought for nearly twenty seconds before looking up suddenly.

"We can hire a professional! After you finish collecting information on Rear Admiral Hurricane, we shall erase the name and hand it over to an excellent detective, then ask him to do the consolidation and deduction. All we have to do is pay a fee!"

*Why didn't I think of that… *Xio's mind went blank. Fors and Xio looked at each other without saying anything.

When the atmosphere became awkward, she cleared her throat.

"We'll do it according to your suggestion."

After saying this, she quickly added, "You'll pay the fee!"

…

Howes Street, Divination Club.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Moretti." The pretty receptionist Angelica looked at Klein in surprise. "You rarely come on Fridays."

Exhausted from searching for the house with the red chimney, Klein smiled and said,

"Fate never repeats itself indefinitely. It always brings us some surprises."

He was in the area, and the time had expired on the carriage he rented; thus, he came for a cup of black tea and some rest.

Furthermore, this would serve as the final layer of the foundations. With the new "experience" at the Divination Club, he would logically mention the application to Dunn Smith.

"Your words are always so philosophical," Angelica praised.

Klein thought for a moment before saying with deliberation, "I might not come to the Divination Club too often in the future, so you need not recommend me to others anymore."

He had already digested his potion, so he had to advance towards a new goal!

"Why?" Angelica said in shock and puzzlement. "You've already made a name for yourself in the club. Most people know that your divinations are very accurate and miraculous. In fact, we were considering getting you to come in on Sundays as a lecturer."

If I was paid one pound for every divination I perform, then I would keep doing this regardless of how tired I was… Besides, I still have to investigate the houses with red chimneys and find the culprit as soon as possible… Klein smiled warmly.

"Madam, do not convince me to stay; this is the arrangement of fate.

"I won't stop coming to the Divination Club entirely, it's just that my visits will become less frequent. I'll still pay the membership fees on time."

I can get reimbursed for it anyway… I will come down occasionally to monitor the place… Klein added in his heart.

"How regretful. I hope that you will be at the club when I happen to be lost." Angelica sighed.

She realized that this wasn't as surprising as she imagined after the initial shock had passed.

Perhaps such a miraculous seer that still respected fate wasn't someone who could be held back by a club in Tingen… Angelica smiled, as if thinking about something.

"Sibe black tea?"

"Yes." Klein returned a smile.

He spent about twenty minutes in the club, spending the time resting, finishing his black tea before leaving the club. He took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

When he entered, he opened the mailbox out of habit and saw that there was a letter placed inside not too long ago.

Klein opened the letter and noticed that it was from Mr. Azik.

"… I will be heading to Morse Town on Sunday and return on Wednesday."

Most of the citizens in Morse Town are believers of the Goddess… He's heading there on a Sunday, which means that according to the usual level of efficiency, the Nighthawks would only receive the information on Tuesday or Wednesday. I can make it… To think that Mr. Azik would remember my request… I hope that he remembers not to do it personally. Him summoning a spirit and doing something scary would suffice… Klein nodded slightly. He released his spirituality and burned the letter with friction.

He flicked his hand, turning the flames into ashes and allowed them to fall slowly onto the ground.

…

Saturday afternoon. Klein was wearing his black windbreaker and hat. He had his cane in his hand as he walked slowly into the Blackthorn Security Company.

After greeting Rozanne, he looked at the partition and noticed that the Captain's office was open. He deliberately spoke louder, "Yesterday. I saw a girl who looked just like you at the Divination Club."

"Really?" Rozanne asked, her interest piqued.

Klein nodded without sincerity. "Yes, in fact, I thought that she was your sister."

"I'm sorry to have to disappoint you, but I have no sisters, not even cousins." Rozanne laughed. "Do you remember her name?"

"No, why would I remember her name?" Klein smiled. "Looking at her was exactly like looking at you."

"Can I take that as a compliment?" Rozanne was a chatty girl who never needed others to start the conversation. She asked on her own accord, "Klein, I would assume that you're earning quite a bit from the Divination Club? As a true Seer, your abilities are far beyond those who take this as a hobby."

We would still be good colleagues if you didn't mention this… Klein coughed.

"A Seer has to be respectful of fate. We cannot use divination to ask for abnormal privileges."

"Are you concluding your own maxim for a Seer?" Rozanne asked out of curiosity.

"Yes," Klein answered frankly.

After a brief chat, Klein said goodbye to Rozanne. He took his hat and walked toward the partition.

Knock! Knock! Knock! He looked at Dunn Smith, who was drinking his coffee, as he knocked on the open door.

"Please come in." Dunn looked up at Klein and adjusted his posture immediately.

Klein had already probed the Captain over the past two days. He confirmed that Dunn Smith hadn't mentioned the "acting method" as he was trying it out. It was clear that he was also cautious of the higher-ups of the Church.

Thus he closed the door and sat across from Dunn. He said with a serious, yet slightly excited expression, "Captain, I believe that I have completely grasped the Seer potion. I wish to submit a special application."

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CHAPTER 154
SHARING "EXPERIENCE"

As he looked into Klein's eyes, Dunn took a deep breath and leaned back. Then, he slowly exhaled as he spoke.

"Are you certain?"

There were minor changes in his facial expression. He seemed to be well prepared for the special application, but he hadn't expected it to be so soon.

Captain, why do you look relieved… Klein didn't conceal his smile as he said, "I'm certain, Captain. When you fully master a potion, you'll feel a very special and magical sensation. You'll have no doubt that you've fully mastered the potion."

"Special, magical feeling…" Dunn muttered those words softly and his eyebrows slowly knitted together.

Huh, the Captain advanced twice without fully digesting the potion? Of course, if he didn't know about the "acting method," it would be difficult to fully digest it. He must've used a prolonged period of time to break it down and was subconsciously "acting" to minimize the risk of losing control… Poor Captain… Klein quietly looked at Dunn Smith, but he didn't speak or say anything further so as to allow Dunn to think carefully.

After almost a minute, Dunn's deep eyes reflected Klein's figure once again. He weighed his words before he said, "Maybe it would be a better option to wait another year."

What the Captain means is that waiting another year would make it less conspicuous. With the example that Madam Daly set for me, the higher-ups wouldn't pay too much attention to me. At most, I would only be put on a list for observation, Klein thought and answered frankly, "At first, I wanted to wait until next year to send in my special application. After all, there are too many things that I need to master. For instance, my combat arts is only at the beginner level.

"But, Captain, don't you think that we've experienced too many coincidences in the last two months? We were chasing after the kidnappers when we came across the Antigonus Notebook in the opposite room. The shipment of Sealed Artifact 2-049 was delayed, but Ray Bieber didn't leave Tingen and tried to digest the power at the harbor. I went to attend a birthday banquet and triggered Hanass Vincent's incident. I went to investigate at the library and ran into a member of the Aurora Order…

"I don't know what these coincidences mean, but I feel insecure. That's why I want to enhance myself in the best possible way."

Klein seized the opportunity to talk about the manipulator behind the scenes. It was something he had planned to include in his schedule—without exposing his uniqueness, he would remind the Nighthawks to make them search for more clues from different angles. What he said earlier would only lead the other Nighthawks to conclude that Klein had a discerning mind and was good at organizing his thoughts.

The moment Klein said the word "but," Dunn's body leaned forward. In the end, he steepled his fingers in front of his mouth.

He fixed his gaze and remained quiet, seemingly thinking about what Klein had said.

After a while, Dunn lifted his head and said in a mellow and deep voice, "Very perceptive… Perhaps there really is something lurking in the dark."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he instructed, "You can submit the special application."

"Alright." Klein lifted the corner of his lips when he answered.

He got up with a smile and walked towards the door. As expected, he heard a familiar additional remark.

"Hold on," Dunn called out. He weighed his words and said, "Take note of your choice of words."

*Don't worry, Captain. I place a far greater importance on this matter than you do! *Klein nodded in agreement with a smile.

At first, he thought Dunn would propose that they avoid going through the Holy Cathedral and instead advance to Sequence 8 in secret. Then they could go through the normal procedure after three years. However, after he thought it through, he realized that it was impossible. Regardless of whether it was through a special application or a normal application, the person who was going to advance still had to be investigated by the Holy Cathedral; the only difference was that one method was relatively simple and the other was more complicated.

If he had become a Sequence 8 in secret, then it could put the entire Tingen Nighthawks in trouble.

…

Since Klein was finished with his mysticism lessons, he didn't go to the basement in a hurry but walked to the clerk's office next door after leaving the Captain's office.

He found a man and a woman sitting in the office. The man was in his thirties and the woman was in her twenties; they were the two newly added members.

They were surprised when Klein entered, then they smiled and nodded in greeting. They were curious and in awe of the Beyonders that they worked with.

Klein didn't chat with them but found an empty desk and began writing a draft for the special application.

As he already had a draft in his head, it only took about ten minutes to complete his initial work.

After reading it a couple of times and amending parts of it, he sat before the Akerson Model 1346 typewriter and started typing his draft onto a document.

Listening to the tapping of the keyboard, the two new clerks exchanged looks and stood up simultaneously. They left the office and went to the reception hall to chat with Rozanne, allowing Klein to have some privacy.

Very careful and fully aware of the need to maintain secrecy… Klein stole a glance at their receding figures as he complimented them.

He focused on his work again and continued tapping on the typewriter.

Just as he was going to complete his special application, Leonard Mitchell came out of the restroom. He looked around while he buttoned his shirt. There was an unrestrained beauty in his messy hair.

"What's the report you're writing?" Leonard looked around the clerk's office as he leaned against the door frame with his right foot tiptoed to balance himself and his hands tucked into his pockets.

His green eyes examined Klein with interest.

Klein typed the last word and the last punctuation mark. He then turned his head and smiled.

"Special application."

"Special application?" Leonard asked, puzzled.

Klein picked up the paper and skimmed through it quickly. He casually explained, "A special application to advance to Sequence 8."

*Cough! Cough! Cough! *Leonard suddenly coughed vigorously. He calmed down and asked,

"You're already done digesting the potion?"

Digest? Bro, you know quite a bit… Klein held his special application and walked before Leonard. He lifted an eyebrow and said, "Yes."

Then, he looked into his eyes and added softly with a chuckle, "I remember someone told me once that there are some people who are special, people who can do things that others can't.

"Such as me.

"Such as you."

Leonard was suddenly at a loss for words. He could only change his standing posture and take his hands out his pockets to cross them in front of his chest.

He opened his mouth and finally organized his words. He asked in a low voice, "Don't you think that it's too risky?"

*As he already knew about digesting, he definitely understands that my advancement has no risk of losing control… Hmm, is he referring to the attention from the higher-ups in the Church? *Klein explained while in thought, "Leonard, do you remember the first task that we worked on together? We were merely tracking kidnappers, but we realized that the room opposite had clues about the Antigonus family's notebook…"

He repeated what he mentioned to Dunn once more.

Leonard's expression grew heavy, and he nodded in agreement slightly.

He muttered to himself and said, "Maybe, I have to hurry up…"

Just as he finished, he suddenly looked at Klein and flashed a smile as he said, "Aren't you going to share your experience with us? The experience to quickly grasp a potion and avoid the risk of losing control!"

This guy sure can put on a facade quickly… Klein smiled and answered, "I'm more than willing to."

He was planning to seize the opportunity today to remind his Nighthawk teammates on how to minimize the risk of losing control.

Of course, to maintain his personal safety, he couldn't say it as straightforwardly as he did to Dunn Smith. At most, he could describe the idea vaguely, in a way that wouldn't alert anyone who was sent down by the higher-ups.

"Let's do it now then!" Leonard impatiently dragged Klein to the Nighthawks' recreation room.

At that very moment, other than Royale who was taking her shift at Chanis Gate, Frye, Kenley, and Seeka Tron were there playing cards.

"Everyone, everyone!" Leonard knocked on the half-closed door and spoke as if he was reciting a poem, "Let me introduce this man next to me, Mr. Klein Moretti, who has fully grasped his potion in a month and a half!"

… This guy is so dramatic… Klein suddenly felt awkward.

"What?" Even Seeka Tron, the author who wasn't famous and barely sold any books, cocked her head sideways as though she was testing her hearing ability.

"Leonard, don't joke around. You're always exaggerating things." Kenley covered his cards helplessly.

Frye held his cards as he looked at Klein. He kept quiet for a while and said, "Are you sure that you've already fully grasped the potion?"

"Yes." Klein could feel his concern and he nodded confidently. "There was an obvious indication."

"What? Really?" Kenley shouted a delayed response and stood up.

Leonard chuckled and pointed at the paper in Klein's hands as he said, "This is the special application that he's going to hand in. The special application to advance to Sequence 8!"

"… How did you do it?" Seeka Tron had many questions, but she only voiced the one that concerned her the most after taking a deep breath.

She was normally quiet and elegant, but now she had a burning passion in her eyes that couldn't be suppressed.

Klein found a chair and sat down. He lowered his voice and answered, "I found inspiration from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers."

"Do as you wish, but do no harm?" Leonard supplemented.

"Yes. According to our confidential information, following this maxim gives the Mystery Pryers a lower probability of losing control," Klein explained what he learned from Old Neil. "After that, Madam Daly's example gave me a better understanding of the process."

"Spirit Medium Daly?" Kenley asked in reply, hoping to gain confirmation.

"Yes. Madam Daly has handed in a special application before. She only used two years to become a Spirit Medium from Corpse Collector. She once told Old Neil that she wanted to be a real Spirit Medium," Klein explained

in detail. "With the experience I gained in the Divination Club and corresponding feedback that I've received, I gradually concluded my Seer principles. Then I followed it strictly and tried to become a real Seer… When I did so, I realized that the speed at which I grasped the potion became faster."

As they listened to Klein's recount, Frye, Seeka, and the rest fell into deep thought. Even Leonard pretended to be thinking.

"I'm going to hand in my special application." Klein waved the paper in his hands. "If you have any problems, do ask me privately."

"Alright," Frye replied coldly with a nod.

Klein left the recreation room and knocked on the door to the Captain's office again.

He sat down opposite to Dunn, then took up a pen and ink pad. He signed and stamped his thumbprint.

"Captain, this is my special application." After that, he passed the paper to Dunn with both hands.

Dunn looked through it carefully and put down the application.

"I'll submit it to the Holy Cathedral as soon as possible. You should be prepared to be examined. Perhaps next week or the following week."

"Alright." Klein took a deep breath and nodded seriously.

He stood up, exited the Captain's office, and closed the door behind him.

During the process, he thought about the application that he had sent in. There was a thought that popped up in his head.

I wonder what kind of examination it will be…

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CHAPTER 155
URGENT MEETING

After collecting himself, Klein went down to the basement and walked to Chanis Gate. He knocked on the door to the guard room.

Inside, Royale Reideen had already packed her personal belongings. She immediately smoothed her hair and stood up when she saw the person taking over her shift.

After greeting each other with a nod, Klein suddenly said, "I've had some success with grasping my potion and have shared my experiences with Frye and the rest. You can ask them about it."

Royale, who typically didn't have much of an expression, looked at Klein with a little shock. Her lips quivered a little as she said, "Alright."

Madam, let's hope that you can still maintain your calm composure in a while… There are already a bunch of dazed people sitting in the recreation room right now. Klein laughed and made his way behind the table, expertly taking out the tin can which Dunn Smith used to store his Fermo coffee.

After making himself a cup of aromatic coffee, Klein sat down and relaxed. He looked out at the lonely hallway and allowed his thoughts to roam free.

Let's hope that Mr. Azik's mission is successful and that he doesn't leave behind any clues. Well, even if there are clues, I can just pretend to not notice them.

I wonder where the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem is sealed behind Chanis Gate? Since it doesn't possess any living qualities, it only needs a little

space…

Come to think of it, I haven't been inside Chanis Gate. I'm not sure what it looks like inside… To be able to keep the weird Sealed Artifacts of varying sizes safe and maintain surveillance, it must be quite special indeed. For example, the ashes of Saint Selena?

…

Many thoughts streaked past Klein's head when he suddenly heard urgent footsteps. He focused and shot a look towards the door.

He saw Old Neil, wearing his classic black robe, appear in the corridor with a black carpet in his hands. He made his way into the guard room and said nothing, but instead observed Klein thoroughly.

"Mr. Neil, did something happen?" Klein let out a dry chuckle and took a sip of his fragrant coffee.

Old Neil sized him up and sighed.

"To think that you would find inspiration from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and Daly…"

"I have to praise the Goddess. I also have to thank you for your teachings." Klein gave a reply in all seriousness.

Old Neil pulled back a chair and sat down. He said, a little depressed, "How good would it be if it was twenty years ago…"

Klein maintained his silence, for he knew that Old Neil wasn't allowed to consume any more potions because of his age and health, even if he had completely digested the one he had right now.

Under such circumstances, anything he said would've agitated him.

"My earliest thoughts was to quickly gain control of my potion from the maxim of the Mystery Pryer, but regrettably, I wasn't embarking in the right direction. Daly's success did give me some clues, but I was already more than 50 years old back then, and had already given up on my efforts. I subconsciously thought that her success was a result of her genius, and that an average person wouldn't be able to emulate her achievements." Old Neil rubbed his temples as he described his disappointment.

He was silent for a few minutes before he lifted his head. He looked at Klein.

"It sure is regrettable that only now do I understand what I've missed out on at this age."

Old Neil should've had a faint understanding of the "acting method." He immediately understood what happened after I shared my experiences… Klein consoled, "It wouldn't have made too much of a difference. The Church doesn't hold the Sequence 8 corresponding to Mystery Pryer."

"Perhaps the Holy Cathedral does have it… No, if they have it, they would at least tell us its name. It's also possible that the underground market might have it…" Old Neil muttered. He shook his head as he stood up. He laughed and said. "At least I didn't lose control, and I've lived healthily for decades… Praise the Lady."

He drew a crimson moon in front of his chest and left the guard room a little dejected. He had lost his usual shrewd look.

Klein looked at Old Neil's back and suddenly let out a long sigh.

He was even more perplexed as to why the higher-ups of the Church would hide the "acting method."

Klein collected himself after some time, placing his attention on the confidential information of the Nighthawks in front of him.

Ever since he pulled the youth from the City of Silver into the Tarot Club and learned that the City of Silver still used the ancient names for many things, he found it necessary to enhance his knowledge in these areas.

Some time later, he heard another set of footsteps. These footsteps were slow and steady.

At the same time, an image of Dunn Smith wearing a black windbreaker flashed past his mind.

*My spiritual senses have been elevated after fully digesting the Seer potion… *Klein nodded in understanding. He saw the Captain a few seconds later.

"A letter for you." Dunn extended his right arm and flicked his wrist, tossing the letter over to Klein.

Klein lifted his hand and tried to grab the letter, but be it his judgment or reaction, he missed.

Pa!

The letter fell onto the floor, leaving Klein's right hand extended awkwardly in the air.

Under the suddenly silent atmosphere, his right hand first became rigid, then he pulled it back toward his head and pretended to smooth out his hair.

"The light from the gas lamp isn't bright enough," Klein made a perfunctory statement casually. He bent his back and picked up the letter, giving it a cursory glance.

Mr. Hornacis… It's a letter from Daxter Guderian… He nodded in understanding and pulled open a drawer to retrieve a letter opener.

According to the rules of the Nighthawks, if there was a clear and correct recipient, Rozanne and the rest of the clerks would give the letter directly to the person that the letter was addressed to. If the recipient was anonymous or an unknown name, it would be handed over to Dunn. He could then ask around or make a decision.

Klein carefully pried open the letter and took out the piece of paper within. He quickly unfolded the piece of paper and read through it.

He realized that the asylum doctor, Daxter, was asking for an urgent meeting at two in the afternoon today.

Has he obtained the Telepathist formula? Or is it regarding something else? Klein lifted the letter in his hand and looked at Dunn.

"Captain, my informant, the one from the Psychology Alchemists, wishes to meet me at two in the afternoon."

"Did he say anything else?" Dunn asked, as if he was expecting this.

"No." Klein shook his head.

Dunn thought for a moment, then said in a heavy voice, "Get Leonard to watch over Chanis Gate for the time being. I'll go with you and hide somewhere. These urgent requests to meet could sometimes be a trap. I've heard of many similar incidents. Furthermore, if it's something important, we can act quickly."

Captain, you sure are experienced… Not to mention being the most reliable, trustworthy Captain without memory issues whenever we have something serious to do… Klein immediately nodded.

"Alright!"

…

At two in the afternoon. Inside the small shooting range 9 of the Zouteland Street Shooting Club.

Klein looked at the target that was covered in bullet holes, then glanced at the uneasy Doctor Daxter Guderian.

"What happened for you to look for mercenaries at the Hound Pub in such a fluster?"

Only by doing so would the boss of the Hound Pub, Wright, hand the letter immediately to the Blackthorn Security Company instead of waiting for Klein to collect it himself.

Daxter observed Klein's expression and body language, then responded softly, "I find Hood Eugen a little abnormal recently."

Hood Eugen was the patient from the mental asylum that had roped Daxter into the Psychology Alchemists.

"What sort of abnormalities has he exhibited?" Klein pressed, displaying his professionalism.

Daxter heaved a sigh of relief, as if he had found a pillar of support. He said while deliberating his words, "H-he seems to have really gone insane…"

"Really gone insane?" Klein asked in shock.

Didn't Hood Eugen feign his illness and infiltrate the mental asylum to attempt to influence the patients in order to train his mental abilities?

He had really turned sick, genuine insanity?

"I think so…" Daxter paced around anxiously. "I could hold a normal conversation with him in the past and receive guidance on how to correctly use my Beyonder powers. But in the past few days, his thought processes and his condition has become really weird. I can barely communicate with

him. He was just like my other patients, even though… even though I've managed to get the Telepathist formula as a result. But I cannot determine if it's real or fake. I'm afraid that there might be some uncontrollable changes that might occur."

No matter. As a Seer, a Seer who has the mysterious world above the gray fog, I'll be able to determine if it's real or fake… Klein heaved a sigh of relief before creasing his brows and asking, "Did he come into contact with anyone before he turned abnormal?"

"Only the patients. I-I cannot guarantee that, though. I'm not in the asylum for the whole day. I also need time to rest," Daxter said, his expression serious.

Klein nodded, as if it was something trivial.

"Don't worry. I'll send someone to protect you in secret. You should find out who Hood Eugen has come into contact with as soon as possible. Also, you have to be careful; he might be testing you. You should also report this to the members of the Psychology Alchemists and see how the higher-ups of your organization react."

"Alright." Daxter propped up his golden spectacles, recovering the calm of a Spectator. He then took out a piece of paper from his pocket and handed it over to Klein. "This is the formula for the Telepathist potion, but I cannot guarantee its authenticity."

"We will verify it." Klein smiled in response. He unfolded the piece of paper on the spot and looked at it.

"Main ingredients: The complete pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander, 10 ml of spinal fluid from a Farsman Rabbit."

"Supplementary ingredients: Chestnut Spore 5 grams, Dragon Tooth Grass Powder 8 grams, 3 petals of Pure White Elf Flowers, Pure Water 100 ml."

"Excellent," Klein praised. He folded the piece of paper and stuffed it into the inner pocket of his tuxedo.

After exchanging a few more words and ascertaining that the "voices" which Daxter was hearing were subsiding, Klein bade him farewell. He cautiously made his way to the shooting range reserved for the Nighthawks. Dunn Smith was waiting inside.

"Captain, the informant gave me the Telepathist formula to thank me for helping him control the side effects of the potion, but he cannot determine the authenticity of the potion." Klein handed the piece of paper to Dunn with a stern expression. "Furthermore, he mentioned something else…"

Dunn read the formula as he listened to the concerns about Hood Eugen. After that, he nodded.

"I'll immediately assign manpower to keep the mental asylum under surveillance. You haven't had professional training when it comes to these matters and don't to participate in this. Go back and guard Chanis Gate."

With that said, he looked at Klein deeply in the eyes and said, "If we take this formula into account, you don't need to accumulate any more meritorious achievements. You can directly receive the Clown potion after you pass the examination…"

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CHAPTER 156
MELISSA WHO TAKES THE LONG VIEW

*And I'm paying double for the Clown's formula… And all this because I originally wanted to be rewarded double for the same piece of work I did. Forget it, I don't have the opportunity to mention that I already have the formula to the Clown potion. *Klein took a deep breath and forced a smile, saying, "Hopefully I can pass the examination smoothly."

He was more than happy with Dunn's decision for him to continue to guard Chanis Gate. Not only was he lacking the professional ability to monitor and investigate, but his hand-to-hand combat was far from satisfactory.

In terms of shooting, he was considered decent compared to the ordinary police. However, his teammates were all Beyonders that have had their physical attributes enhanced. Even if they weren't all marksman-level, they were very close.

As for hand-to-hand combat, Klein was merely a beginner.

Even with a Slumber Charm, a Repose Charm, and a Dream Charm, he was still considered a support-class Beyonder. It would be easy for him to deal with ordinary people, but he would be in danger if he were to come across any Beyonders who were adept at combat.

Until I advance to Sequence 8, become skilled in technique-based battles, and master a handful of spells, I can only complete normal supernatural missions on my own. Hmm, if I successfully steal the power of Sealed Artifact 3-0782 and make Flaring Sun Charms, that will be even better. It

won't be impossible for me to win from a position of an underdog… Klein thought hopefully as he slowly walked back to the Blackthorn Security Company.

The next morning when he ended his shift and left Chanis Gate, the Nighthawks still hadn't obtained any useful information from monitoring Hood Eugen. For now, they had to place their hopes on their informant's internal investigation.

When he returned home, Klein had his breakfast quietly and laid down in his bedroom to sleep until noon.

He woke up naturally, washed up, and walked to the first floor, following the smell of cooking food.

"Melissa is preparing lunch?" Klein looked at Benson who was reading the newspaper in the living room.

Benson lowered the newspaper and said, "Yes, she has a guest visiting today. I wanted her to chat with her guest while I prepared lunch. But she doesn't trust my cooking and took the guest into the kitchen. How rude."

Benson, you actually managed to quickly realize that Melissa detests your culinary skills… Klein held back his urge to laugh and walked towards the single seat sofa as he asked, "Melissa's guest?"

"Yeah, you should know her. Elizabeth, we met her at Selena's dinner banquet." Benson leaned backwards and continued to read his newspaper comfortably.

It wasn't only at the dinner banquet… She came to visit for real… Klein turned to look at the kitchen with a stunned expression.

Just then, Melissa walked out carrying some plates and Elizabeth followed behind, also wearing an apron.

"Klein, you're already up? I was just planning on waking you up." Melissa laid the plates on the dining table delightedly as she said, "This is Elizabeth. You know her."

"Hello, Klein." Elizabeth's adorable face flashed a splendid smile as she greeted him.

Klein replied gently and politely.

After they greeted, Melissa blinked and spoke seriously, "Elizabeth will follow us to the Family Servant Assistance Association later. They hire a few maidservants at home, so she has experience in that. Her opinions might be helpful.

"Actually, we've already drawn up the requirements for picking a maidservant. Listen to this and see if there's anything that needs to be added."

Melissa wiped her hands on her apron and took out a piece of paper from the pocket of her home clothes. She opened it and read it out loud.

"1. Healthy.

"2. Hardworking and responsible.

"3. Good at cooking.

"4. Quiet, not rowdy.

"5. Simple family background.

"6. Looks ordinary."

…

She read the requirements one by one while Klein and Benson gawked with a vacant look; they never expected that hiring a maidservant would be so troublesome.

"Melissa, weren't you against the idea of hiring a maidservant?" Klein subconsciously asked when his sister stopped.

Melissa pursed her lips and nodded solemnly.

"Yes, I was against it. But as my opposition was in vain, I thought we should get this thing done properly. To be able to get it done well, we must be well prepared. Hmm, do you have anything that you'd like to add?"

"No!" Klein and Benson shook their heads in unison, causing Elizabeth to laugh.

After lunch, the four of them took a public carriage to the Tingen Family Servant Assistance Association on Champagne Street.

It was similar to domestic help firms that Klein knew of from his previous life, but it was also a little like a charity. They recorded the personal information and job requirements of different maidservants so that the clients could make their selections more easily, while maximizing the maidservants' chances of employment.

Part of the organization's funding came from charity organizations, and some came from a percentage of the payment provided by employers.

Upon entering the association, Klein and company were greeted warmly. A young lady in a pale yellow ruffled dress led them to some sofas. She smiled and asked, "How may I help you?"

Benson, who was pushed forward by his brother and sister, said, "We need to hire a maidservant."

"Do you have any requirements?" the young lady asked like clockwork.

Benson recalled his siblings' lack of faith in his culinary skills as he said sincerely, "Good at cooking."

"Good at cooking?" The young lady creased her eyebrows and said, "To be frank, there are no excellent cooks among the maidservants. Why not hire a chef instead? If you need a female chef, we have quite a number of them in the association."

"There is no one who is good at cooking among the maidservants?" Melissa couldn't help but cut in as her initial plan was set back.

The young lady nodded and answered affirmatively, "The maidservants are either the daughters of lower class laborers or girls from the villages. They have few opportunities to learn culinary skills. Even after the simple training provided by the association, the most we can guarantee is that their food won't make people sick."

Melissa fell silent, finally realizing what it meant to have situations outpace her plans.

"That is regrettable." Benson thought, reorganizing his words, he said, "Maybe we can amend our requirement to a maidservant who is willing to and is capable of learning to cook."

Not bad. Benson is quick-witted… There's no need for me to interject. Klein sat by the side, holding his cane and hat comfortably.

"No problem. During cooking training, we took note of girls who had outstanding performance," the young lady replied with a professional smile. "Any other requirements?"

"Yes." Benson felt the burn of Melissa's gaze. He swallowed his saliva and took out the piece of paper from his pocket. He then read the items one by one.

The young lady listened quietly and only responded after quite a while.

"I-I'll first check through the records and recommend some maidservants that fit the criteria. You don't have to decide immediately. You can pick two to four of them. Then, I will bring them each over to cook for you once. You can decide who to employ then. Of course, you will have to pay the association some extra fees, and you will also have to prepare your own ingredients."

"Alright." Benson folded the paper and nodded politely.

The young lady stood up and walked towards the office, but she turned around after taking two steps. She smiled and said, "Can you pass me that paper? I'm worried I will forget some of your requirements…"

"No problem." Benson held back his urge to laugh when he answered.

After a while, the young lady in the pale yellow dress came out with a stack of documents and passed them to Benson.

The information had each of the maidservants' real name, birth date, family situation, facial description, health status, past experience, related traits, expected salary, and other information.

Seizing the opportunity when Benson and Melissa were reading the information, Elizabeth got closer to Klein and asked softly, "Don't you have any requirements?"

"Yes, but this information isn't specific enough," Klein answered perfunctorily.

Elizabeth got even more interested.

"How would you choose?"

Klein smiled and pointed at the hidden pendulum in his left sleeve, "I would divine the best person to become our maidservant by writing down a

corresponding statement about each candidate and eliminating them one after another."

"…" Elizabeth was stunned, nodding vacantly after nearly twenty seconds. "The simplest and the most effective way… I totally forgot that you're…"

She didn't finish her sentence since Melissa, who had sharp senses, noticed that they were whispering and had looked over.

She looked at her best friend and her brother, then she showed an expression of deep thought.

*Hey, Sis, don't misunderstand! We are just talking normally… *Klein coughed and picked up some of the information and casually read through them.

Very soon, they picked three candidates. They were asking for four soli eight pence to five soli two pence per week.

Benson didn't haggle over the maidservants' pay but instead discussed the percentage that he needed to pay to the association.

After some friendly haggling, he successfully negotiated the price from the maidservant's two weeks pay to one week pay instead. However, he had to pay a transportation fee of one soli for them to bring the maidservants over to try cooking.

After that, Elizabeth bade the trio farewell and left while the siblings took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

On the way back, Klein was getting uncomfortable under Melissa's scrutinizing gaze. When he got home, he went to the second floor directly.

"Klein," Melissa called him in a serious tone after thorough consideration. She said, "If you want to get engaged with Elizabeth, you have to work

harder. Her father is an important businessman, and her mother is the daughter of a baron…"

*Wait, engaged? When did this happen? *Klein looked at his sister in confusion.

How far reaching is her concern?

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CHAPTER 157
ITEM OF HIS DREAMS

"No, we are not…" Klein didn't have the chance to retort before Benson interrupted with a smile. "Although Elizabeth is indeed a little young and her family is much more outstanding than ours, I find the two of you quite suitable for each other. But you might have to wait a few more years. She is still studying at a public school and wants to enter university. Marriage should be something to consider only six to seven years later. Of course, you can get engaged sooner than that."

… *Can you guys not think that far ahead?* Klein took in a deep breath.

"I do not fancy Elizabeth, or, well, more accurately, I do not fancy a girl who is younger than me by too much. I prefer girls who are more mature."

Truthfully, I can accept anyone within a reasonable age gap, just not now… He added inwardly in exasperation.

"You like girls who are more mature?" Melissa knitted her brows. "Then you should quickly settle the issue regarding your marriage."

Ah? Klein couldn't understand his sister's leap in logic. He asked in confusion, "Why?"

Melissa explained seriously, "You will be about 25 when you finish saving up for your marriage. Girls that are more mature than you will either be married or engaged when they reach that age. Do you want to chase after a widow?"

*What the… *Klein thought to himself in Mandarin as he wore a blank expression.

Benson smiled and refuted his sister, "Melissa, you don't understand. In this day and age, it isn't rare to see women in their thirties who isn't married or engaged within the middle class. They are mostly followers of the Goddess, and all have the ability to provide for themselves. They would rather be single than stuck in a marriage that they are not satisfied with. Yes, that's what I read from the 'Family' magazine."

"Is that so?" Melissa was a sixteen-year-old girl after all. She didn't have a great understanding concerning matters like this.

Upon seeing his siblings getting roused up from the conversation, Klein coughed and said, "What I meant by mature is their mental state. They don't need to be older than me. Furthermore, the person that should be worried about their marriage is Benson."

I'm sorry, Brother, I had no choice… he apologized in his heart.

"…" Melissa froze for a moment, then nodded heavily. "That's right!"

Benson was just about to elaborate on the marital problems of the middle class when he suddenly shivered. He looked at his sister who was staring at him and said, "I am now at the cusp of a turning point in my life. I have to devote all my attention to studying. I will only be confident of chasing after my desired girl when I have found a job that I'm satisfied with and have a reasonable amount of savings. Only then will I be able to provide her with a good life."

Klein and Melissa froze, then asked in unison, "You have a girl that you fancy?"

Benson, who had merely given a perfunctory reply, was shocked. He shook his head in a hurry.

"No! I was merely giving an example!"

…

In a dark, gloomy house of Backlund, Hillston Borough.

A middle-aged man with graying hair sat silently on a rocking chair in front of an unlit fireplace with a dark colored pipe in his hand. He looked at the guest on the sofa.

He was the master of this building, Isengard Stanton, a private detective with notable fame. But he didn't set up an office, merely hiring assistants to assist him.

Isengard, who was dressed in a white shirt and black vest, brought the pipe to his lips and inhaled in an intoxicated manner before slowing exhaling.

"The fee for a thirty minute consultation is one pound. If I were you, I would definitely not waste a second."

The two ladies on the sofa across from him were Fors Wall and Xio Derecha. They had found materials relating to Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos and wanted to ask this detective to consolidate the habits and actions of their target.

Of course, they had removed Qilangos's name and changed the description regarding supernatural incidents.

Xio Derecha handed the folder containing the documents to Isengard's assistant, a browned-haired young man wearing gold-framed spectacles.

"Mr. Detective, I hope that you can find habits in the target's actions using the material we have provided."

Even though she wasn't tall, Xio Derecha had an air of authority when she sat straight and spoke with a deep voice.

Isengard stared at her and received the docket from his assistant. He opened the folder and took out the material within.

He set down his pipe and focused on reading page after page without missing a single one.

Ten minutes later, this gentleman slowly tapped on the handle.

"The target has an obsession with the wind… He won't stay for long in a polluted area in Backlund, the Capital of Dust. In other words, he could be staying at the Empress Borough, West Borough, Hillston Borough, Cherwood Borough, or the suburbs of the North Borough…

"The target is a psychotic serial killer with the need to kill someone every other day… The most logical thing he could do is to target the vagrants that have nowhere to go. Even the police have no records of the exact number of vagrants in Backlund…

"The target wouldn't be living in an area too near or too far from North Borough or Backlund Bridge, which have the highest concentration of vagrants… It would be the act of someone unsophisticated to search for victims that are too close to him. That isn't consistent with your descriptions… If the target has to spend a large amount of time before he can find someone to murder, then he might lose control of his desires and commit crimes that would easily expose himself…

"The target is an experienced sailor and has exceptional mobility in the water… A reasonable deduction would be that he wouldn't be living somewhere too far away from the water. If anything unexpected happens, that would be his best means of escape…"

…

"In summary, we can outline the possible radius of activity for the target. He should be living somewhere close to the Backlund Bridge area. Perhaps

somewhere close to both banks of the Tussock River—the West Borough or the Cherwood Borough…"

…

"I can only deduce this from the materials that you have given me."

Even though they didn't understand all of it, his deductions seemed to make sense. Xio and Fors looked at each other and nodded. They took back their materials and stood up to leave.

Seeing his assistant send off the two ladies, Isengard took out a bronze item from his vest pocket. It was an open paperback book. In the middle of the book was a vertical eye.

Isengard rocked his chair, rubbing the item while softly muttering to himself, "Qilangos has infiltrated Backlund?"

…

In a particular basement of Pritz Harbor.

The Hanged Man Alger sat in a chair, looking coldly at a struggling man.

This man was dressed like a sailor. His head was enveloped by a film of pale-blue water and his face was purple from holding his breath.

He was scratching at the film on his face with both hands, but all he could do was flick droplets of liquid.

Finally, he could no longer hold his breath and gave a signal of submission.

Alger smiled, then nonchalantly clapped his hands.

The thin film of water dispersed, turning into droplets that fell to the ground.

The sailor took in a deep breath and coughed violently. He coughed so hard that it tugged at his heart and lungs.

After waiting for the man to recover, Alger leaned back. He emulated the peaceful and calm tone of The Fool.

"Tell me the reason why Qilangos went to Backlund."

"H-he's there to complete a commission, but I'm not sure about the details." The pirate had completely lost the will to resist. He answered honestly, "All I know is that he might receive something that he wants. Qilangos once boasted in front of us. He said that if this mission was a success, he would be able to obtain something he's dreamed of getting for a long time. The Four Pirate Kings would then become the Five Pirate Kings."

An object he's been dreaming of obtaining? Alger knitted his brows and slipped into deep thought.

…

Klein didn't rest on Monday morning. He followed his plan and continued his investigation on the buildings with red chimneys in Tingen.

Unfortunately, he didn't come across his target.

He returned home near noon. He heated up the leftovers from yesterday's dinner and paired them with bread before taking an hour's nap.

At about twenty minutes to three in the afternoon, Klein put his book down and sealed his room with a wall of spirituality, once again entering the mysterious world above the gray fog.

He sat at the seat of honor at the ancient bronze table, extending his hand toward the crimson star representing Sun while ignoring the frequency of his heartbeats.

In the City of Silver.

Derrick Berg was sweating on the practice grounds. His vision suddenly blurred as a heavy fog entered his view. He saw The Fool sitting high above, deep within the fog.

He froze, then stopped whatever he was doing and bowed his head.

When the illusion vanished, he counted his heartbeats silently and carried his silver sword to a rest area quickly.

A thousand heartbeats later, he locked himself in a bathroom.

After about ten breaths, he saw the red light swell over him and swallow him in an instant.

Above the gray fog, Klein leaned back into his chair and tapped his left molar twice to stealthily activate his Spirit Vision.

He saw that the mottled color deep within The Sun's Ether Body had turned pure, akin to the light of dawn. He smiled and said, "Congratulations, Mr. Bard."

At the same time, he saw the stars behind The Sun's chair shift quickly, turning into the symbol of the Sun.

It transformed without my will, as if it was a reflection of the Sun. Also, other than the palace, table, and chairs, the items that I conjure cannot be preserved once I leave this world… They are very special… There sure are many secrets to this world above the gray fog… Klein took in everything in front of him as he contemplated.

Derrick lowered his head and replied humbly, "This is all due to your assistance. This is but the beginning."

He wasn't surprised that The Fool knew that he had consumed the potion.

Klein took out his silver pocket watch and looked at the time. He chuckled and said, "Then let us start the gathering. Remember, the frequency, or should I say gap between the gatherings should be about the same in the future."

As he was speaking, he established a connection with the crimson stars representing Justice and The Hanged Man before pulling them into the majestic palace.

Audrey looked at the scene before her and immediately greeted him.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool. I have a page of the diary of Emperor Roselle with me."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Sun. Have you gotten the formula for Telepathist?"

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CHAPTER 158
PREPAREDNESS AVERTS PERIL

*How enviable it is for Miss Justice to always maintain a cheerful mood. I wish I could be like that… *Listening to her lively greetings, Klein couldn't help but sigh wistfully.

He then recalled the time when she had taken out a thousand pounds so easily, and he realized that it would be very difficult if he wanted to maintain his cheerful emotions like Miss Justice.

The Sun, Derrick Berg, was a young man that cared a lot about his reputation. He immediately replied, "I have obtained the Telepathist formula."

For the past week, he had been settling the inheritance that his parents had left him. Besides the property, furniture, and a few sentimental items, the rest of the valuable items were brought to the black market in the City of Silver in exchange for the Telepathist formula and the Bard potion's ingredients. His meals were now rationed.

However, he believed that the situation wouldn't be for long. When he passes the combat examination, he would then join the team that cleansed the Things of the Dark in the outskirts of the city and be paid a decent amount.

*When I become stronger, I'll apply to become a member of the elite squad, to explore the depths of the dark and find a way to remove the curse… *Derrick thought with hope as he looked towards The Fool who was engulfed in the fog.

He noticed that last time, after Miss Justice made a request to Mr. Fool, she was able to produce a page of the unknown Roselle diary out of thin air!

Although Derrick didn't quite understand what had happened, he felt that it'd be better if he watched Mr. Fool.

"First, recall the formula in your head. Then, grab the pen by your side and instill it with the strong desire to express your thoughts." Klein casually leaned back in his high chair.

As The Sun was from the City of Silver, which might be the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the pen that instantiated before him wasn't a fountain pen, but a quill instead.

Of course, there still wasn't any ink.

Derrick didn't dare to doubt what The Fool said, so he immediately grabbed the quill that suddenly appeared by his hand.

He followed The Fool's instruction, and as expected, he saw the Telepathist potion formula appear on the brown goatskin parchment before him within seconds.

After looking through it twice, Derrick silently pushed the promised item towards Miss Justice.

Audrey was overjoyed and eager, but she took the parchment gracefully. She glanced at the page, and the words that Klein had translated came into sight.

"Main ingredients: Phantom Netherdrake's complete pituitary gland, 10 ml of Half Specter Rabbit.

"Supplementary ingredients…"

Main ingredients that I've never heard of… Hmm, I don't know enough. Audrey, who had been trying to learn more about the different types and names of Beyonder ingredients from Fors and Xio, seemed to fret in thought.

During such moments, she would completely forget how a Spectator should behave.

Suddenly, Audrey heard a light rapping sound. She quickly looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table subconsciously.

She was surprised to see Mr. Fool rapping at the edge of the table with his right index finger while he gestured to her with a nod.

What's going on? Audrey was confused as her eyes wore a vacant look.

Just when she was about to ask, the corner of her eyes suddenly saw some changes on the Telepathist formula. There were remarks next to some of the ingredients:

"Main ingredients, Phantom Netherdrake's complete pituitary gland (also known as Rainbow Salamander), 10 ml of Half Specter Rabbit (also known as Farsman Rabbit).

"Supplementary ingredients…"

*I know all of these! *Audrey was stunned at first, then there was an intense surge of delight from the bottom of her heart.

"Thank you, Mr. Fool. You're really very knowledgeable." She looked towards the seat of honor as she thanked and sincerely complimented him.

The Hanged Man Alger didn't know what had happened, but he felt extreme contempt towards what Justice had said.

How could you describe a godlike figure with the word "knowledgeable"?

His existence alone is equivalent to knowledge itself to a certain extent!

Klein accepted Miss Justice's compliments without any misgivings because this wasn't something he could've done just because he had chanced upon the Psychology Alchemists' Telepathist formula.

After he pulled The Sun into the Tarot Club, he had been taking precautions against such problems by taking into consideration The Sun's special circumstances of being from the City of Silver. He had been constantly studying ancient terminology. Therefore, even if Daxter Guderian hadn't managed to get the formula in time, he could've made the notations easily. Through prior divination and comparison, he had made certain that both Telepathist formulas were accurate.

This is why we say, "Preparedness averts peril…" Klein thought smugly.

Audrey looked at the Telepathist formula a few times and then reined in her gaze unwillingly. She then personally expressed Roselle's diary onto a page.

"You deserve this." She put down her pen and looked towards the fog-engulfed Fool. "In addition to this, I'll give your adorer another 300. Is 300 pounds okay?"

She sounded a little guilty because the three pages of Roselle's diary only cost her twenty pounds, while the Sheriff formula at Sequence 8 required 450 pounds.

In other words, from the perspective of simple math, she had to pay another 430 pounds on top of the three pages of the diary.

However, Audrey felt that it was thanks to her luck that the seller didn't know the value of Roselle's diary. It allowed her to buy it at a low price.

*Emperor Roselle's diary costs at least fifty pounds per page! *Audrey held her fist and encouraged herself.

300 pounds? Until today, I've only seen that much money at Sir Deweyville's place… Klein sighed and pretended to not be interested in money as he nodded and said, "A reasonable deal.

"This is my adorer's information."

He avoided speaking of terms like "Backlund Bank" and "anonymous account" verbally through The Fool's mouth as they damaged his image. He made them appear on the parchment before her.

Klein had taken time to visit Backlund Bank's Tingen branch last Wednesday while investigating the houses with red chimneys. He had disguised himself and opened an anonymous bank account.

The account only required one to memorize his account number and the corresponding password in order to withdraw cash from any Backlund Bank branch.

If one found that it wasn't secure enough, he could also request to add in a signature and thumbprint verification. But that would be more troublesome.

In order to keep his identity secret, Klein left it with a password.

The password is written in ancient Hermes: "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

*As ancient Hermes itself can be used for rituals and prayers, anyone who dares to copy the password would be reciting my name. Then, I'll immediately receive a signal, and can simply find out who's the one trying to steal my wealth from the world above the gray fog! *Klein was very satisfied with the idea that he came up with.

The only downfall was that it would slightly expose the existence of The Fool, but the risk was within an acceptable range.

Audrey pushed the diary page to Mr. Fool as she took the parchment with the information of The Fool's adorer. Recorded on it, was the Backlund Bank and a bunch of numbers that formed the anonymous bank account.

I wonder if Mr. Fool's adorer is a male or female, and which Sequence he or she is… Hmm, he must be very powerful, at least not weaker than Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos… Audrey couldn't stop her thoughts from wandering.

But she quickly focused and memorized the anonymous account.

"It doesn't have to be so troublesome." Just then, she heard The Fool's low yet gentle voice. "When you get home, recite my name and you'll be able to write down the information directly."

This would be just like when I drew the red chimney scene through divination… An account number is very important, you can't memorize it incorrectly… Klein added in his head.

*That works too? From Mr. Fool's words, he appears very confident. He lives up to his status of a godlike figure if he can even do this… *Audrey was stunned at first before coming to the realization that everything seemed to make logical sense.

But, why did I have to memorize the formula earlier? Audrey was suddenly confused again.

At that moment, Klein pressed down on the page of Roselle's diary, but he wasn't in a hurry to read it. He looked to the side at The Sun and calmly asked, "What compensation would you like?"

Derrick thought seriously and said, "As of now, I don't have anything that I desperately need… I should digest the Bard potion very soon. I shall wait until then to request my compensation. Yes, perhaps to prepare for the corresponding Sequence 8 formula or the necessary ingredients."

Sequence 8 is Light Suppliant, which I have… but the ingredients. Even if I had them, I would have no idea how to give them to you. Wait, he used the word digest… Indeed, the City of Silver knows of the "acting method"… Hmm. The highest Sequence there is only Sequence 4, so are they limited by ingredients? Klein nodded in deep thought, agreeing to the deal.

Audrey also sharply noticed the word "digest." She weighed her words and asked, "Mr. Sun, are you aware of the 'acting method'?"

Derrick looked at Miss Justice in confusion and answered straightforwardly, "It's nothing strange… The general education classes in the City of Silver teaches the 'acting method.'"

The "acting method" is taught in general education classes… Audrey stole a glance at The Hanged Man and realized that he was looking back at her. The two of them suddenly fell silent.

The origin of The Sun is indeed mysterious. I wonder where Mr. Fool pulled him into the Tarot Club from… The more I think about it, the more I revere him… Audrey settled down and looked at The Fool who didn't look visibly surprised in any way.

Then, Alger probed, "Mr. Sun, do you talk about any key things to look out for with respect to the 'acting method'?"

"Yes." Derrick nodded without hesitation. "It's clearly stated in our general education classes that the one and only key point for the 'acting method' is to 'Remember that you're only acting.'"

As expected… We're using an ingenious method to go around obstacles and completely break down the remnant spirits in the potion, without submitting to it… The Sun, you're such a simple boy. You just shared important information by accident… Klein smiled and cast his eyes on the diary page before him.

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CHAPTER 159 BESTOWMENT AND SACRIFICE

Messy Chinese sentences were scribbled on the yellowish-brown goatskin.

"2nd August. This goes deeper than I imagined. History sure is something that can be manipulated easily.

"5th August. I witnessed the abilities of a High-Sequence Beyonder today. It was scary indeed. There's a qualitative change that has happened to them in a particular aspect, it was as though they've transformed into a deity. It's no wonder that we describe them as 'Demigods', though I think calling them 'Legendary beings' is more fitting.

"6th August. There's something strange going on. Why would the Seven Major Churches adopt such a strange attitude towards the potions? At the low to middle Sequences, they not only provide the main ingredients to those who managed to advance, but they're also generous enough to share the formulas and demonstrate the process needed to create the potion. They would also explain in detail if a ritual is needed to create the medicine, yet finished potions are the only things they provide to those who are advancing to the higher Sequences.

"This isn't logical. Shouldn't they keep the formula a secret for the lower Sequence potions and give the candidate the completed potion since it's relatively easy to gather the necessary ingredients and create the potion? As for the higher Sequence potions, shouldn't they share the formula and make the promising members search for the ingredients due to the difficulty of obtaining the main ingredients?

"There must be some hidden secret to this.

"9th August. The events of the past two days have made me feel uncomfortable. I started the Industrial Revolution with my own hands and personally ushered in the Age of Steam and Machinery, but this will create the conditions necessary for the Evil God to descend upon this world?"

*What does he mean? The conditions necessary for the Evil God to descend upon this world? *Klein knitted his brows, his index finger tapped on the edge of the ancient table.

Did Mr. Fool encounter a difficult problem? Anything that can trouble him must be something of another level… Audrey looked at the leader obscured by the thick fog and interpreted his state through his body language.

Klein was indeed pondering over the problem related to the upper echelons, but he didn't arrive at an answer. He considered the possibility of using divination to gain some sort of revelation.

Yes, it would be impossible to divine something of use with such simple sentences. I'm not a prophet… What if I divine with the statement, "the conditions necessary for the Evil God to descend upon this world"? It feels too risky… The Evil God might not be as horrifying as the Eternal Blazing Sun, but its abilities might be much more mysterious. It might be able to trace the divinations back to me. There's also no way to divine how large of a risk I'll be taking if I were to divine that statement. After all, just divining if something poses any danger is dangerous once it has deities involved…

I'll keep this question in mind and put more effort into observation.

The arrangement of the Churches regarding potions is indeed mysterious. I wonder what kind of secrets they're hiding? Perhaps I'll receive some hints about that once Spirit Medium, no, Spirit Guide Daly is made Archbishop or a high-ranking Deacon and enters the core of the Church…

Roselle's description does make me look forward to the power of High-Sequence Beyonders…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind before Klein stopped tapping on the edge of the ancient table and looked at Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun.

"You can start your discussion freely now."

Alger immediately said, "Mr. Fool, Miss Justice, I received a new piece of information. Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos infiltrated Backlund to complete a difficult mission. He might stay for an extended period of time and create an appalling tragedy. Also, I know that this incident involves a very important item, an item that would allow Qilangos to quickly become a High-Sequence Beyonder."

"Quickly become a High-Sequence Beyonder? Does he not fear losing control of himself?" Audrey asked, adopting the posture of a Spectator.

Qilangos was only a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, so there was still a Sequence between him and Sequence 4.

Alger had expected this question. He answered honestly, "That's why the object is important to him."

"Of course, those are simply my deductions. The information I received goes like this: Qilangos believes that once he completes the commission and obtains the object, he will be the equal of Nast, the King of the Five Seas. The Four Pirate Kings would then become the Five Pirate Kings, and the Seven Pirate Admirals will be reduced to six.

"The average person might not aware of this, but as Beyonders, we should know that Pirate Kings are either High-Sequence Beyonders, or are able to reach the combat strength of a High-Sequence Beyonder with the use of Beyonder boats and mysterious items. For Qilangos to be acknowledged as

their equal, he must reach standards that are close to that. That's my deduction."

All I know is that the King of the Five Seas, Nast, is a Sequence 4 Beyonder, but I'm not sure of the name of his potion… Klein listened on silently, not giving his opinion.

The Sun, Derrick Berg, didn't understand anything The Hanged Man said. He didn't know who was who, but he still listened attentively. He felt a new door had presented itself in his world.

*Pirates? The place they live in has seas that are mentioned in books? Then, the environment these people live in is very different from the City of Silver… They don't seem to be very worried about the curse or the attacks of the Things of the Dark. It definitely makes me very curious… But, Mr. Fool once instructed me not to ask about the secrets of others. It's a very rude gesture… *Derrick thought in his heart, once again observing The Hanged Man and Justice.

"You deduction is very reasonable. Of course, that could also be a mysterious item that could hold its own against a High-Sequence Beyonder," Justice replied with a smile.

The Hanged Man looked at the fog-enshrouded Fool, pondered over his words, before he looked at Justice and emphasized, "There are two key points in what I said just now, the first being the fact that Qilangos will stay in Backlund for some time. The second is that the incident involves a very important and very mysterious object."

So, Mr. Fool, are you not tempted? There is ample time for you to send your adorer to Backlund… Alger added in his heart but didn't dare say it out loud. All he could do was beat about the bush.

Mr. Alger, you don't need to emphasize this repeatedly, I know what you are getting at… But my abilities do not allow me to interfere in these matters.

Furthermore, I can't leave Tingen without permission… Klein leaned back and thought in frustration.

Ignoring the adorer, I can actually find two relatively strong Beyonders to help…

One is Daly, who has advanced to Sequence 6, but I cannot tell her everything. The most I can do is mention that I've gotten some information that Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos has infiltrated Backlund and is living at a particular street and what he plans to do. That way, Daly might directly enlist the help of the Nighthawks, making the situation very complicated and troublesome… If you guys cannot find anybody to help you when the time comes, then I can try that to prevent a tragedy…

The second person is Mr. Azik, but I cannot expose my identity as The Fool to him. I don't have a proper reason to get him to interfere with this incident…

Many thoughts flashed through his mind as Klein replied slowly, "I'm aware."

Seeing how The Fool continued to not place much importance in the matter regarding Qilangos, he sighed and held back his disappointment. He started asking about the investigation Miss Justice conducted last week.

"… In conclusion, we have more or less targeted the general area Qilangos will be at, and we'll soon start the next phase of investigations." Audrey first gave a simple summary, then with the attitude that she was doing something important, said, "We need more information, preferably the hobbies and habits of Qilangos."

Alger recalled, "He loves fish, especially fish from the sea. He would slice it and eat it raw…

"He also likes hard liquor, and despises champagne, red wine, and the like…

"He will often look for women to relieve his needs whenever he heads to shore, and with his strong body, one woman will not be enough to satisfy him…

"He's used to using cold weapons and avoids hot weapons.

"He cannot be away from water for long periods of time. What I mean is that he needs to swim or dive once every couple of days."

…

Audrey committed these facts to memory, creating an ample character of Qilangos in her mind.

"Let's hope that the investigation will be a success. It's a pleasure working with you." She smiled after Alger was done.

"My pleasure." All Alger could do was force himself to believe in Miss Justice, who had considerable power in Backlund.

Throughout the interaction, Klein seemed to be listening intently, but in reality, his thoughts had been diverted to another question. That was the question of how to deliver ingredients to Sun if he did manage to obtain them.

Now that he had a passable understanding of the field of mysticism, Klein instinctively followed the line of thought of using ritualistic magic. This reliance was natural given the successes he had when using ritualistic magic.

When I was previously flipping through the confidential information of the Nighthawks, I came across records of the Goddess bestowing holy items to her followers. There were also records of items descending in rituals involving evil gods or devils… Does this mean that I can "bestow" someone something when responding to their prayers, and transfer materials that way?

In previous attempts, I could only reply with thoughts containing pictures and voices. But that doesn't mean that it'll always stay that way… There could be some new changes when I advance to Sequence 8…

There's also something important to consider. Can I bring material from the real world into the world above the gray fog? And… Hmm… Oh right, there's often a step for "sacrifices" in rituals involving evil gods and devils! Can I consider "sacrificing" something to myself?

In that way, perhaps I can bring some material from the real world into the world above the gray fog…

If this attempt is successful, I can get items directly from Justice, The Sun, and The Hanged Man, and then bestow them to myself.

Yes, "sacrifice" is considered a more advanced ritual, so I won't be able to learn of it for now…

The most important thing to do now is to improve my abilities!

Klein reined in his thoughts, and once again listened in on the conversation of the other members. He listened as their discussion changed from Qilangos to the characteristics of particular monsters.

Some time later, he smiled.

"Let's end it here for today."

"By your will." The Sun, Justice, and The Hanged Man stood up at the same time.

After severing the connections of the members, Klein quickly descended from the fog and left the mysterious space.

When he returned to his room, he dispelled the wall of spirituality and pulled back the curtains by the oriel window, allowing the sunlight to shine

in.

There are two important things to do this week. The first is to get examined and advance to Sequence 8. The second is to make Flaring Sun Charms. Its powers might be even higher than that of Sequence 7 or 6… Klein looked outside with anticipation.

Tomorrow. I should be able to receive the report of Mr. Azik's paranormal disturbances tomorrow!

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CHAPTER 160
SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

Tuesday morning.

Having completed his mysticism curriculum, Klein didn't look for a quiet corner to read "Comparison of Ancient and Modern Names" or "Nighthawks Case Compendium," and instead stayed in the break room to play cards with Leonard, Kenley, and Royale.

I only told Mr. Azik to create an opportunity for me to take Sealed Artifact 3-0782 out… It'll still depend on my improvisation skills to seize the opportunity… Klein's mind wasn't on his cards, so he played terribly. He lost five soli in an hour, and he felt the pinch. He planned to concentrate on the game to recover some of his cash.

After he bought various ingredients for the Flaring Sun Charms yesterday afternoon, his private stash of cash reduced to less than one pound once again. Plus, he had to pay two soli every day for the carriage rental fees to search for the house with the red chimney.

As they were waiting for Kenley to shuffle the cards, he picked up the copper penny before him and spun it casually.

He suddenly felt Royale's gaze on him, a very intense gaze.

*What? *Klein was first stunned, then looked at the copper penny that was about to fall.

… Is she wary of me cheating with divination? We're just playing cards amongst ourselves, do we have to be so serious about this? He suddenly

understood and slammed down the penny with a dry laugh.

Just then, Dunn Smith knocked on the door and entered. He looked around and said, "There's a situation in Morse Town. Leonard, please handle it."

Morse Town? Klein felt his mind jolt as he pretended to ask curiously, "Captain, what kind of situation?"

Dunn glanced over and explained, "Recently, there have been a few paranormal cases in the area. Firstly, people would hear sobs when walking past the cemetery and see vague figures flash by. Then, a widow encountered her deceased husband when she woke up to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. She nearly fainted from the fright. In addition, there was an elderly man who lived alone. He began hearing heavy footsteps reverberating in the house all the time. However, silence reigned once again the moment he lights a candle or gas lamp. The people in the town are believers of the Goddess, so the local priest reported the situation."

No one got hurt, and it almost borders on the level of a prank…. It should be Mr. Azik… Klein used an expression and tone that he had rehearsed many times. "Captain, there might be a secret link for these paranormal cases to happen so suddenly. In this situation, divination could provide an important clue. I think I can help Leonard."

Upon hearing that, Leonard's green eyes immediately locked onto Klein. He was apparently trying to find clues and traces from Klein's face.

Dunn nodded first, but remained quiet and hesitant.

When Klein saw the Captain's response, he immediately added, "Some of these things might require ritualistic magic to purify them."

"Makes sense." Dunn thought and said, "You and Leonard will head to Morse Town then."

Without anyone saying anything else, he additionally added, "Hmm, you won't be able to make it for your combat training in the afternoon. I'll send someone to inform Gawain."

Phew, the first step is complete… Klein silently let out a sigh. He quickly packed away his soli and pence.

Then, he suddenly paused and looked sideways at Dunn. He said solemnly, "Captain, I think we should prepare for the worst. If there's a powerful wraith behind the paranormal events, it might be very dangerous for only Leonard and I. Plus, it takes two, uh—three hours to get to Morse Town, right? Even if we manage to send a telegram to request for backup in time, we would still have to hold out for quite a while…"

"So?" Dunn interrupted.

"I want to get the assistance of another teammate." Klein pretended to think for a moment and said, "And, according to the rules, a mission with three or more Nighthawks involved can apply for a level three Sealed Artifact. Yes, 3-0782 is most suited for this job."

Upon hearing that, Leonard laughed and said, "Exactly your style. Careful, cautious, taking no risks."

You seem to be implying that I'm a coward… I'm a person who looked directly at the Eternal Blazing Sun! Klein pretended that he didn't hear Leonard and earnestly looked at Dunn Smith.

"Captain, what do you think?"

"We should really take extra care against any accidents. There have been too many coincidences lately…" Dunn nodded thoughtfully and looked at the other two teammates. "Kenley, join Leonard and Klein on their trip to Morse Town. Oh, hurry up and write an application. After I sign it, retrieve Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from Chanis Gate."

"Alright," the short Kenley said, putting down the cards in his hand.

Alright! Klein fist-pumped in his mind while he looked anxious and solemn on the outside.

At that very moment, Seeka Tron was monitoring Hood Eugen in the asylum while Frye was on duty at Chanis Gate.

Klein left the recreation room and put on his black tuxedo. He took his hat and cane, then waited together with Leonard for Kenley at the stairway that connected to the basement

There was no one there, and it was extremely quiet. Leonard suddenly looked sideways at Klein and said, "I think you'd better give up on any unrealistic dreams."

"Ah… What?" Klein replied in confusion.

Leonard walked forward and stood by the edge of the stairs. He looked into the darkness of the stairway.

"Even during a mission, it will be impossible for you to discover my secret and understand my uniqueness."

… Bro, can you stop thinking so highly about yourself? Did you think I applied for this mission to spy on you? I didn't even have such thoughts! Enlightened, Klein chuckled.

"How can you be so sure that my uniqueness won't help to reveal your secret?"

Leonard's expression grew grave, but he then smiled and said, "It will, huh? I shall wait for you to discover it then."

When I gather more information and items, I will go to the world above the gray fog to help you do a divination. You're welcome! Klein thought

sarcastically in his head.

Soon, the small-framed Kenley brought the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem up the winding stairs.

When Klein felt the unique warmth and purity, he secretly heaved a sigh of relief. He knew that he had finally completed the very first and most difficult step in his plan of siphoning the powers of the Eternal Blazing Sun's divine blood.

Then, the three of them left the Blackthorn Security Company and walked to Zouteland Street. They walked towards the carriage that belonged to the Nighthawks.

"Will the purifying effect bother the horse?" Kenley suddenly asked anxiously. "I don't want a horse that can only praise the Sun to pull the carriage…"

He had been a Nighthawk for longer than Klein, but he was far from experienced.

"No, Sealed Artifact 3-0782 only purifies living entities with a high level of intelligence," Klein lowered his voice in response.

If not, I wouldn't be bitten by insects… he added blankly in his head.

"Oh, I see… Haha, I didn't read the information thoroughly enough." Kenley pressed down on his black silk hat and laughed in enlightenment.

As Klein had yet to master the skill of driving of a carriage, he sat inside the carriage for the following three hours. He rubbed the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 in his hand while he watched Leonard and Kenley take turns driving.

They finally arrived at Morse Town around lunchtime.

"How beautiful…" Kenley complimented sincerely as they stepped down from the carriage and looked towards the boundless golden wheat fields that surrounded the town.

The dates representing the Volcanic constellation was coming to an end, and the Bumper Harvest constellation was going to rule everyone's life.

Leonard was in the driver's seat as he looked around and opened his mouth, as though he was going to recite a sonnet.

But in the end, he only spurted one sentence, "How beautiful."

Klein held back the urge to laugh as he put on his top hat, took his cane, and got off the carriage.

At that moment, a middle-aged man in a black priest's gown walked over. He drew a crimson moon on his chest and said, "Praise the Lady. Are you the friends that Saint Selena Cathedral sent to help us?"

"Yes, Priest Siur. May the Goddess bless you." Leonard jumped off the carriage and replied with a smile, "We're here to take care of the recent paranormal incidents."

"Seemingly. Seemingly." The gray-haired, blue-eyed Siur saw many townsfolk approaching as he quickly emphasized.

Morse Town wasn't big. Regardless of which direction one chose to travel in, one would enter the plains within ten minutes. The people who stayed there knew each other, so what happened earlier had spread.

Many townsfolk were waiting for the Church of the Evernight Goddess to send people to resolve the problem. Hence, when they saw that the priest was greeting three strangers, they quickly surrounded them out of concern and curiosity. Some tiptoed and some tried to hear what they were saying.

Leonard chuckled and said, "Priest, don't worry. We're professionals. Look, we brought Holy Water, silver daggers, Dark Sacred Emblems, and also garlic."

He took out the described items from the inner pockets of his clothes as though he was pulling a magic trick.

Garlic? Are you trying to stink the spirits to death? Klein found it ridiculous yet funny as he watched Leonard's performance.

Siur wore a look of confusion, and he even started to suspect that the Saint Selena Cathedral had sent over a bunch of frauds.

The citizens who surrounded them revealed gratified smiles, as though they were finally in safe hands.

Leonard got close to Priest Siur and explained softly into his ear, "They believe in these things…"

Without waiting for the priest's reply, he added, "Let's have lunch at the church first. Then, we shall take care of those matters."

Yes, lunch is very important… When those paranormal incidents are taken care of, it'll be time to take turns looking after Sealed Artifact 3-0782, and also the opportunity for me to make Flaring Sun Charms… Hopefully, everything goes smoothly… Of course, making Flaring Sun Charms during the daytime would get the best results… Klein thought, brimming with anticipation.

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CHAPTER 161
INVERTED MAUSOLEUM

Most of the buildings in Morse Town adhered to a style that was popular a hundred years ago. The most eye-catching building in the town was the black cathedral spire.

After settling the carriage, Klein and the others quickly finished their lunch of bread, toast, bacon, butter, and coffee.

"We can still tolerate about two hours and thirty-five minutes of Sealed Artifact 3-0782's purification." Kenley stood at the door of the church and took out a pocket watch from his suit's pocket. "I suggest dealing with the suspected haunting incidents first to prevent the situation from getting worse. Then we can return to the church and take turns watching over the Sealed Artifact to recover."

Under normal circumstances, Sequence 9, 8, and 7 Beyonders had to stay far away from the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for two hours to recover completely, or at least an hour if they were to make a partial recovery.

"Alright."

"I have no objections."

Klein and Leonard spoke in unison.

"Then which case should we deal with first?" Kenley asked.

Leonard wiped away his frivolous attitude and said, "Let's start with the old man living alone who heard heavy footsteps in his house."

"Why?" Kenley asked instinctively. Klein was also interested to hear an explanation.

Could this be the intuition of a poet? He mocked Leonard secretly.

Leonard shifted his gaze from Kenley's face to Klein's, then looked at Kenley again. He smiled.

"Because it's the closest to the church."

"How did you know that? It's not written in the records…" Klein asked.

Leonard snickered. "Didn't I go to the bathroom during our meal? I came across a trainee priest on my way back and had a conversation. He told me that Noah's house was close to the church—Oh yeah, the old man's name is Noah."

**He sure lives up to his name as an experienced Nighthawk when it comes to performing missions… **Klein gave a dry laugh. He turned to Kenley and said, "Then let's go to Noah's house first."

"Alright." Kenley didn't have any objections.

They arrived at Noah's house a mere minute later…

Noah was an old man with thinning white hair. He had lost his left hand in a war when he was younger and had no choice but to leave the army. He returned to his hometown after he received his compensation.

At that moment, he opened the door and looked at the three strangers in front of him before looking at Siur who was rushing over from the cathedral. He said with a raspy voice, "Come in, I hope that you can solve my problem. I heard that you brought Holy Water, Sacred Emblems, a silver dagger, and garlic? This is great, my worries have eased greatly. Please forgive my blabbering, you have to understand the condition of an old man

after not being able to sleep peacefully for two nights, Oh my Goddess, I've been so scared all this time that my head feels like it's in a cloud."

Leonard suddenly straightened his back when he entered the house, his eyes surveying the surroundings.

After that, Klein felt a cold aura within the room. Those were traces of activity left behind by a ghost.

"There really was an impure being here." Kenley was the last one to notice as he suppressed his voice.

"Very weak." Leonard said with a relaxed tone as he retracted his gaze.

The Midnight Poet was a job with a relatively high spiritual sensitivity when compared to all the other Sequence 8's in the Church's records.

"Yes." Klein could feel the warmth and purifying energy of Sealed Artifact 3-0782 quickly dispelling the sinister aura in the room without any trouble.

At this moment, the people of the town had all gathered at Noah's house, all looking curiously at Klein, Leonard, and Kenley.

Cough! Leonard cleared his throat and recited, "We have the blessings of the Goddess, those impure beings will vanish quickly and won't bring about any more trouble."

After that, he shot a look at Klein for him to perform a "purification ritual" for everyone to see.

Why me? Klein shot a look back.

Of course, he didn't know if Leonard understood what his gaze meant.

But clearly, Leonard understood. He said softly, "You're the expert in rituals."

Alright, blame me for being the one who volunteered for this mission. Klein tidied his clothes and took out the Holy Water, Sacred Emblems, a silver dagger, and garlic from Leonard.

He first placed the Dark Sacred Emblem in front of his chest, then peeled the garlic and tossed its cloves one by one to every corner of the house.

"Hmm, this is how garlic is used to dispel ghosts?"

"It's different from the descriptions in the newspapers…"

"Will this work?"

…

The townsfolk looking at them broke into discussion, curious and excited, as if they were watching a circus.

It's useless! I'm just acting! Klein suddenly felt that he had become a clown. He closed his eyes and splashed the holy water onto the ground with the silver dagger.

He splashed the water as he walked around the house, reciting an incantation, "The Evernight Goddess…

"The Mother of Secrets… The Lady of Crimson…

"Empress of Disaster and Horror…

"Mistress of Calm and Silence…"

…

These typical acts of a charlatan shocked everyone present as the townsfolk fell silent.

And once people turned silent, it was easy for them to notice something they missed.

"What a warm feeling."

"It feels like I'm sunbathing…"

"No, I feel like I'm looking at a pure sky…"

"How magical… Is this the effect of the Holy Water?"

"They sure live up to their names as priests from Saint Selena Cathedral!"

"Praise the Lady!"

…

The townsfolk discussed in whispers. The looks they gave Klein, Leonard, and Kenley slowly became that of respect. Noah also visibly relaxed, not doubting that the problem had been solved.

Sealed Artifact 3-0782 is doing all the real work here… We don't actually need to do anything to chase the ghosts away, all we need to do is stay here for a minute. It's not tiring or troublesome at all… After Klein purified the sinister aura off every corner of the house, he opened his eyes and put away his silver dagger, drawing the shape of the crimson moon in front of his chest with a serious expression. "Praise the Lady!"

"Praise the Lady!" the townsfolk replied devoutly.

"We still have things to deal with, but we need absolute silence." Leonard smiled as he looked around.

The townsfolk, after witnessing something so professional, didn't stay. They receded from Noah's house like a tide following Priest Siur's lead. Even the master of the house had to leave temporarily.

"I actually wanted to take a nap…" Noah pouted as he walked toward the cathedral.

Leonard took a step forward and closed the door, then turned towards Klein.

"Do a divination on the cause of this incident."

"No problem." Klein also wanted to find out what he could divine.

I know Mr. Azik did this, but he seems to be of a rather superior nature. Haha, a person that can live for 1300 years must be of a superior nature… So my divinations should definitely be affected. Under such circumstances, without the help of the mysterious space above the gray fog, even I'm not sure what revelations I would receive… Klein took out the pen and paper he brought along with him and wrote down a divination statement:

"The cause of the haunting at Noah's house."

He held the piece of paper and walked to a round table. He then took a seat, closed his eyes, and leaned back.

Klein suddenly saw a black mausoleum in his blurred, hazy dream world.

It was similar to a pyramid, but stood inverted and was almost fully buried.

A black fog obscured everything within the ancient mausoleum.

Klein snapped awake and opened his eyes.

"Did you find anything?" Kenley asked in concern.

Klein thought for a moment and described the revelation he received in his dream without hiding anything. He ended it by saying, "The mausoleum was definitely not in the style of the Northern Continent, I mean the Fifth Epoch. I'm somewhat of an expert in this field."

Leonard nodded, seemingly in thought.

"That's an Inverted Pyramid from the Southern Continent. It represents the entering of the nether realm from the living world. It's a mausoleum that only the so-called Descendants of Death can erect for themselves, be it in the Balam Empire of the past, or its satellite states such as the Highlands Kingdom.

"In some sense, it's the symbol of Death.

"Well, the ghosts are definitely related to Death. The results of the divination are undoubtedly correct!"

Ignoring Leonard's mockery, Klein suddenly had an interesting thought.

Could Mr. Azik be the descendant of Death, or could he have made a transaction with Death to obtain such a long life?

According to a chapter from The Revelation of Evernight, as well as the internal records of the Nighthawks, Death was a malevolent god, once causing a catastrophe in the Northern Continent at the end of the Fourth Epoch. Those times were now referred to as the Pale Era.

Hmm, it's said that Death fell to the combined efforts of the Seven Gods… It's impossible to determine when Lamud Castle was built—but it couldn't have been built before the Pale Era.

If there was a connection, then there would be something to investigate regarding the person working behind the scenes, lives in the house with the red-chimney, and stole the skull of Mr. Azik's child…

Of course, this could be an excuse for the Northern Continent to colonize the Southern Continent. After all, most of the inhabitants of the Southern Continent believes in Death…

The three Nighthawks didn't stay for long since they didn't discover anything. They soon left Noah's house and started dealing with the two other haunting incidents.

The same process, the same results. They quickly rid the town of the auras of dead spirits, but didn't manage to find the cause of all the trouble.

Along the way, Leonard asked the townsfolk if any strangers had entered the town in the past few days, but received a negative answer.

Mr. Azik didn't come? He must've come and left in secret without anyone noticing him. He sure is cautious… When he said that he would be returning to Tingen by Wednesday, did he mean that these spirits would vanish on their own accord today, even if we weren't here to deal with it? Klein thought about it as he returned to the entrance of Morse Cathedral with Leonard and Kenley.

They could still last another hour and forty-five minutes with the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

"We'll take one hour shifts looking after the Sealed Artifact." Klein suppressed the excitement in his heart. He looked at the color of the sky and said, "Let's try to head back to Tingen City for dinner."

"No problem." Leonard glanced at Klein and laughed. "But for safety's sake, I suggest that two people look after the Sealed Artifact while one rests."

Klein froze for a moment, his mind churning quickly. He smiled in reply.

"Sure, but this way, we have to calculate the most logical rotation. Who gets to rest first? Who's next? And who will be last? How much time do we need to recover? And by how much? Well—I think that we have to establish an algorithm with an unknown value in order to establish the best way, then compare it with the effectiveness of having one person look over it at a

time… It's even better if we can compare the efficiencies too. Let's first assume that the unknown value is…"

"Wait!" Leonard's green eyes were filled with blankness and fear. "If that's the case, let's look after it one at a time. The person looking after it will stay in the cathedral during his shift, as it has a sufficiently large radius. Of course, we'll have to get Priest Siur and the rest to stay somewhere else. The other two will stand guard outside the church and prevent others from coming close."

"I share the same opinion." Kenley had felt a headache coming on as Klein spoke about the mathematical problem.

"Alright." Klein nodded, looking as though he was forced to do so.

If he hadn't been able to convince his partners, then he would have to make a deal with Leonard in secret, giving away some information about himself to get him to leave.

But the problem was solved now!

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CHAPTER 162
INTENSE SUNLIGHT

Weak light shone through the narrow window from high above, making the interior of Morse Cathedral a little more visible.

Klein put his top hat on his knee while he leaned his leg against his cane. He sat quietly on the first row of the left pew and looked at the altar before him.

There weren't any statues of the Goddess except for a massive Dark Sacred Emblem. Its base was black, with a crimson half-moon that was surrounded by radiant points of light.

On the wall behind the Sacred Emblem, there were a few openings which allowed sunlight to shine in from the outside. They were focused into tiny specks of pure light which combined with the dark surroundings to form a scene that resembled that of a lofty starry night sky.

None of the traditional Gods ever left behind an actual image. Only their symbols are worshiped and glorified by people… That seems to be a manifestation of the command, "Do not look directly at God"… Klein let his thoughts wander. He wasn't in a hurry to make the Flaring Sun Charms as soon as he got the opportunity to be alone with Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

He felt that he had to be careful, patient, and had to wait. Within the first fifteen minutes, it was possible that Leonard and Kenley would enter at any moment to remind him about points that he should take note of.

In this extremely quiet atmosphere, time flew by quickly. Klein suddenly snapped back to his senses as he took out his silver vine-leaf pocket watch,

flipped it open, and took a glance.

Twenty minutes have passed… He muttered to himself. He then set his silk top hat and silver edged black cane by the side. He got up and walked towards a hidden corner near the altar.

At first, he faced the side of the altar, but once he saw the large Dark Sacred Emblem and the holy scenery that resembled a depiction of a night sky, he felt guilty and uncomfortable. Hence, he turned his back to the altar.

Then, Klein took out the Sealed Artifact 3-0782 from the inner pocket of his black tuxedo. He bent down to place the golden unadorned badge on the ground.

Klein took a look at the Sun symbol that was filled with abstract meanings, then he took out a small candle mixed with sandalwood. He put it right at the bottom of Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

That was the dualistic ritual that he learned from the Eternal Blazing Sun. He used an item that was closely related to the deity to represent "Him" while he used the candle to represent himself.

He took a deep breath to ease his tense emotions. Klein then took out the items required for the ritual, one after another, including a carving knife, two thin gold slices, Sun essential oil extracted from the combination of black-rimmed sunflower, golden-rimmed sunflower and white-rimmed sunflower, Golden Hand fingered citron powder, and also rosemary powder.

After that, Klein adeptly used the silver ritual dagger to guide the flow of spirituality. He guided it to flow around the simple altar and created a shapeless sealed wall.

He squatted down, placed the silver dagger down, and extended his right hand. He lit up the candle that represented himself by rubbing his spirituality.

Under the flickering dim light, Klein picked up the Sun essential oil and dripped a drop onto the flame.

With a puff, an illusory fog spread out with the slight scent of sunlight.

After burning the fingered citron and rosemary powder, Klein held the carving knife and golden slices. He stood up, took a step back, and then recited in Hermes, "The blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

"You are the Inextinguishable Light, the Embodiment of Order, the God of Deeds, the Guardian of Businesses."

…

Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Deeds, and Guardian of Businesses were all parts of Eternal Blazing Sun's honorable titles. If there wasn't the prefix of the blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the ritual would require the god's response to proceed. If so, Klein suspected that the Eternal Blazing Sun would recognize him as the disrespectful person that looked at "Him" directly. Then, Leonard and Kenley would only find a pile of black ashes when they entered.

Plus, the ritual had to be conducted via Ancient Hermes, a ritualistic language that stemmed from nature. Only a language without any protection but had outstanding effects could allow an incantation to sidestep around the Eternal Blazing Sun and point towards the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

At the same time, as he was stealing the power from a deity, Klein had no way to divine if it would be successful ahead of time. He felt that it would result in him directly dealing with the deity again. So, he could only recite the rest of the incantation with a strained heart, "I pray to you,

"I pray for you to give me strength,

"Give me strength to complete the Flaring Sun Charm.

"The blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun, please transfer your strength into my charm…

"Oh fingered citron, a herb that belongs to the Sun, please bestow your powers to my charm…"

…

As the incantation neared completion, Klein suddenly felt something light up before him.

The simple gold badge radiated with an intense light, as though the sun had descended onto the land.

Klein suddenly found himself enveloped in extreme heat. His hair was heating up rapidly and was almost on the brink of igniting.

His feet felt like they were stepping barefoot on yellow sand that had been exposed to the midday sun, and his face and body were greeted with the hot wind blowing from every direction.

In that instance, he felt that he needed to do something to let the burning energies out. Otherwise, he would turn into a human candle.

It required almost zero thought as Klein lifted both his hands. While his thoughts were boiling over like porridge, he relied on the combination of his spirituality and the strong winds, as well as his instincts and ritualistic guidance, to begin etching symbols, corresponding Path Numbers, magical characteristics, and ancient incantations onto both sides of the gold slices with his carving knife.

Outside the church, Leonard was standing in the shadows to hide from coming into contact with direct sunlight.

Suddenly, the sunlight intensified, like the hottest days of a year in early July.

He squinted his eyes and looked towards the sky. He saw that the blue sky had no clouds or dust. It was so pure that it made people gasp with admiration.

"Such strange weather." Beside him, Kenley also noticed the changes in the sunlight.

Leonard responded with a smile when he suddenly turned his head.

He knitted his eyebrows slightly and cast his gaze towards the cathedral.

"Luckily Rozanne isn't here. Otherwise, she would be complaining about the sun tanning her skin," Leonard looked away and said with a smile.

The blazing sunlight remained intense for a few minutes before it returned to normal.

In the cathedral, Klein's carving knife finished the final stroke.

As he finished the magical characteristic that represented light, the spirituality on both sides of the gold slices suddenly melded together, as the light converged onto the metal.

No, this is even closer to godhood… Klein was finally relieved from the boiling and burning sensations. He examined the two Flaring Sun Charms in his hands with a clear mind.

The golden luster on the surface of the charms had turned dim, and the pattern looked ancient yet complex. There was a warm, damp feeling that seeped into Klein's skin bit by bit.

"Not bad. I finally have a more impressive trump card." Klein sighed emotionally.

He set the activation incantation for the Flaring Sun Charms as the word "light" in Ancient Hermes.

I want light and there will be light… He quipped, amused. Then, he put the Flaring Sun Charms into another pocket. He didn't put them with the Slumber, Requiem, and Dream Charms, because the Flaring Sun Charms would decrease their efficacy period.

"Yes, the power of the Flaring Sun Charms can be maintained for at least a year, or even longer." Klein reined his thoughts back and looked at the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem on the ground.

It didn't look any different on the surface, and it still gave off feelings of warmth and purity. Klein finally relaxed, and quickly completed the ritual and removed the spiritual wall.

At that point, he thought to examine himself. He realized that his clothes were almost drenched, and he was covered in sweat. The edges of his hair were slightly curly too.

Thankfully, thankfully… Klein sighed in satisfaction. He put away his things and returned to his original seat. He was so exhausted that he slept the moment he sat down, until he was woken up by footsteps.

His eyes shot open, and he touched the Flaring Sun Charms subconsciously to see if they were still there.

"You don't look alright?" Leonard asked as he entered the cathedral.

Klein massaged his temples, stood up, and smiled.

"I'm nearing my limit."

He took out his silver pocket watch and took a glance. "Just in time. It's your turn to look after Sealed Artifact 3-0782."

Before he finished speaking, Klein took off the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem and passed it to Leonard.

Leonard watched Klein walk out of the cathedral. Then, he dropped his frivolous attitude and examined Sealed Artifact 3-0782 attentively and seriously. He grew confused and looked bewildered.

After the shifts ended, the three Nighthawks began their journey back.

Before that, they told Priest Siur to take note of the town's situation. If there were any paranormal incidents, he was to immediately send a telegram to Saint Selena Cathedral.

At twenty minutes past seven that night, they finally arrived at Zouteland Street and returned Sealed Artifact 3-0782.

When he had made sure that the Captain didn't notice anything unusual, Klein left the Blackthorn Security Company and arrived home before eight.

He took out his keys and opened the door, only to see an unknown figure.

It was obviously a maiden who wasn't even in her twenties. She was in an old, grayish-white dress, and she was wiping the dining hall with all her might.

She had black hair and brown eyes. Her eyes were small, her nose wasn't sharp enough, and her facial features were very ordinary.

*Who is this? *Klein was stunned at first, then he realized that she was most likely the maidservant that had come for a trial.

At that moment, Benson lowered his newspaper and looked at his brother. He smiled and said, "A company that doesn't allow employees to leave the office on time is annoying."

"But it provides a salary that can counteract any kind of dissatisfaction," Klein replied with a laugh.

When Miss Justice's 300 pounds reach me, I'll inform Benson and Melissa about my raise to six pounds a week, that way they would worry less about our family's finances… Klein thought as he put his cane aside and took off his top hat. He walked to the living hall and lowered his voice as he asked, "Have you made a choice?"

He had divined the information of the three maidservants the day before, and he had found that all three were suitable. Hence, the decision was left to his brother and sister.

"Yes, Bella. Weekly salary of five soli. She's very willing and also capable of learning cooking. She hopes that she can become a home chef, at which point her weekly pay will double. Her father is a factory worker at the Tingen Steelworks Union Factory, and her mother is a laundry worker," Benson replied with a chuckle. "Of course, another thing that led Melissa and me to the decision is that the other two servants believe in the Lord of Storms, and she is a believer of the Goddess. I personally don't mind the believers of the Lord of Storms, but Melissa didn't quite like the idea."

It wasn't that Melissa didn't like it, a more accurate description would be "I grieve at their misfortune and am infuriated at their refusal to resist." Yes, it was said by Lu Xun! Klein recalled his sister's behavior, and revealed a smile.

Benson didn't elaborate further. He put down the newspaper and stood up.

"Since you're back, let's have dinner."

…

The next day, Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company in a good mood.

"Good morning." Rozanne looked to the left and then the right. Then, she said, "Old Neil is sick, let's go and visit him at noon. What say you?"

"Old Neil is sick?" Klein asked in surprise.

Could it be that the ritual for treating diarrhea caused severe constipation?

Well, from the way he acted after learning of the "acting method," it's not impossible for him to suddenly fall sick… He's getting old, so once his mind turns frail, his body would also suffer from those ramifications…

Rozanne nodded and said, "Yeah, he sent someone to the Captain to request some time off."

Klein nodded slightly. "Let's visit him at noon. Sigh, Old Neil sure is pitiful. His wife passed away early, and his son is busy in some other city. When he's sick, all he can do is stay at home in loneliness and helplessness."

That was the first thing he recalled from his first visit to Old Neil's house.

Listening to Klein's sigh, Rozanne opened her eyes wide and asked in shock, "When did Old Neil get married?"

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CHAPTER 163
VARIOUS SIGNS

What? Klein was left dumbfounded when he heard Rozanne's question. He recalled in his daze, "I previously visited Old Neil's place just last month. I saw a piano in the living room and he told me that his deceased wife loved music…"

As he spoke, Klein suddenly became alarmed as he began having unpleasant thoughts.

Rozanne knitted her beautiful brows and said with uncertainty, "Perhaps I remembered wrong… No, Mrs. Orianna and I frequented Old Neil's place during the earlier half of the year. There was no piano in his living room back then. I clearly remember asking him why he chose to remain single. His answer was that he hasn't met a lady that he wished to marry…"

There was no piano during the earlier half of the year, and he answered the question of why he chose to remain single… Klein tightened up and asked in a deep voice, "Rozanne, how long has it been since you visited Old Neil's place?"

"Not ever since Kenley became a Nighthawk, and Viola chose to resign as a clerk. I've been either burning the midnight oil or catching up on sleep, so how could I have the time to visit him? It's been… since the beginning of June." Rozanne became a little lost upon receiving the question, so all she did was answer honestly.

Klein's heart sank, as if he sensed something was wrong.

He fished out a halfpence from his pocket and held it between his thumb and middle finger.

He took a deep breath and quickly decided on a divination statement.

"There's something wrong with Old Neil's current situation.

"There's something wrong with Old Neil's current situation."

…

His pupils quickly darkened as he recited the statement silently and entered Cogitation.

Ding!

He flicked his thumb, pushing the brass coin into the air and allowing it to spin.

Pak! The coin fell right into Klein's open palm.

This time, the portrait of George III was facing up.

The portrait signified that it was correct, that it was positive.

That meant that there really was something wrong with Old Neil's current situation!

As Klein clenched the coin, he suddenly remembered the translucent pair of cold and ruthless eyes without any brows that he had seen behind Old Neil when he had just become a Beyonder and was experimenting with his Spirit Vision.

Old Neil had explained that the pair of eyes was a characteristic of ritualistic magic!

*That's right, I also saw an almost formless human figure by the door at the periphery of the light. The color of its aura was identical to the surrounding darkness… Also, after I completely digested the Seer potion, I secretly changed the way I activated my Spirit Vision to the tapping of my left molar. I happened to look at Old Neil and he suddenly coughed violently… *Scene after scene appeared in Klein's mind, turning his expression grim.

Rozanne looked at him and asked in fear, "Did Old Neil lose control? No way, even though he's petty and stingy, and wants to be reimbursed for all of his expenses, he's still a good person. He rarely gets angry. No way, he wouldn't lose control…"

"I cannot be sure, but I think that Old Neil is on the brink of losing control." Klein consoled Rozanne. He quickly made his way past the partition and opened the door to the Captain's office.

Dunn Smith was startled by the sudden intrusion, nearly choking on his coffee.

"What happened?" He didn't blame Klein, his expression instantly becoming stern.

Klein answered simply without hiding anything, "Captain, my divination tells me that there's something wrong with Old Neil.

"Last month, Old Neil told me that his late wife loved music, but today, Rozanne told me that he's remained single all this time.

"Also, on the day that I became a Beyonder, I saw a pair of mysterious eyes looking over everything behind Old Neil. There was also an almost transparent human figure near the door spying on us. He told me that those were characteristics of ritualistic magic.

"I felt that something was off and, thus, attempted a divination."

After Dunn finished listening intently, he stood up immediately. As he walked over to to the coat rack, he asked in puzzlement, "Why didn't you directly divine if Old Neil had lost control?"

"Over the past month, Old Neil hasn't acted any differently from ordinary Beyonders. He even worked with me to help Swain deal with a Mandated Punisher who had lost control. I've also observed the colors of his aura from time to time and noticed that he's relatively healthy other than his frailty that's due to his age. Thus, I think that he's only close to losing control. He could still be saved," Klein explained his point of view in one breath.

Dunn put on his black hat and windbreaker before nodding.

"A very reasonable deduction… Let's go pay a visit to Old Neil now, and oh —try not to agitate him if possible.

"After that, we can attempt to control him and use ritualistic magic to stabilize his condition to prevent it from getting worse."

Control.… Klein had an idea when he heard this term.

"Captain, could we use Sealed Artifact 3-0611?"

He had been thinking about how he could resolve Old Neil's problem and save him, but he hadn't arrived at an answer as he had been too flustered, too uneasy, and too worried. He was reminded by Dunn Smith's words and recalled that the Sealed Artifact might be useful.

"Number: 0611.

"Name: Peaceful Hair Strands.

"Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be applied for operations that require three or more people.

"Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

"Sealing Method: No direct contact with living organisms.

"Description: A simple decoration formed with many strands of black hair.

"As long as contact is made with a living being without any protection, the living being would lose all their desires and emotions, including, but not limited to: Hunger, Anger, Grief, Pain, Envy, Jealousy, Hate, Joy, Satisfaction, Greed, etc.

"It has been ascertained that living beings under 0611's influence will even lose the desire to break contact with it. They will silently stay in their spot until the end of their life.

"If an external force is used to break contact between the person and 0611, then the person will gradually recover. But experimental data suggests that the prerequisite to this is that the person has not been in contact with the Sealed Artifact for more than two hours.

"Once the contact lasts for more than two hours, the victim would become silent for eternity.

"The highest Sequence tested is Sequence 5.

"You can avoid contact by means such as wearing gloves.

"The strands of hair aren't equipped with the capability to live. It doesn't have any inclinations of escaping the seal.

"Appendix: These strands of hair appeared during a failed advancement. It was something left behind when a Captain of the Nighthawks failed to advance to Sequence 6."

The grayed-eyed Dunn nodded after he heard Klein.

"Great suggestion, I nearly forgot about 3-0611. Find Royale in the recreation room. I'll retrieve the Sealed Artifact from Chanis Gate and

submit the application after we come back."

*That's the way, no time to waste! *Klein didn't dawdle. He immediately went to the recreation room and shouted for the usually expressionless Sleepless Royale.

"What's the mission?" Royale asked calmly.

Klein exhaled and said in a serious tone, "Pay Old Neil a visit."

"Pay Old Neil a visit… he?" Royale opened her eyes wide as she had an ominous feeling.

"It's not confirmed yet." Klein shook his head gently.

Royale didn't speak any further. They slipped into silence, turning the mood heavy.

A few minutes passed, and Dunn finally returned from the basement.

He was wearing black gloves and had a tangled mess of black hair in his hand.

Compared to the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, the Peaceful Hair Strands didn't look particularly weird. It would be glossed over by people if it were tossed on the road somewhere.

After calling for the chauffeur Cesare, the four of them made their way to Old Neil's house.

The wheels of the carriage rolled across the asphalt road that was wet from the rain. The carriage interior was more silent than the night.

It was unknown how much time had passed until Dunn sighed.

"Old Neil did have a partner that he was about to be engaged with when he was younger, but she suddenly became terminally ill. Old Neil risked divulging the secrets of the Beyonders and tried using ritualistic magic to save her, but he didn't succeed. Old Neil back then was just a beginner in mysticism.

"According to the records, the Nighthawks back then were all on alert, afraid that Old Neil would lose control because of this. But luckily, he managed to find his sanity and looked normal."

Let's hope that this is a false alarm as well… Klein couldn't help but draw a crimson moon before his chest and prayed, "May the Goddess watch over him."

Dunn and Royale followed suit.

"May the Goddess watch over him."

…

The sky started to turn brighter as the dark clouds receded. The Nighthawks arrived in front of Old Neil's bungalow.

After getting Cesare to drive the carriage far away, Dunn collected himself and walked towards the main door, cane in one hand and Sealed Artifact 3-0611 in the other.

Klein pressed down his hat as he and Royale followed behind the Captain. They made their way past the rose and gold mint garden.

When they reached the door, Klein took a step forward and pulled on the rope connected to the bell within the building.

Clink! Clang!

A pleasant chime resounded in the house as it broke the heavy silence.

*Clink! Clang! Clink! Clang! *Klein pulled several times, then politely took a step back without making any further attempts.

The three Nighthawks waited patiently for a few minutes, but they didn't hear any footsteps approaching the door.

"Perhaps Old Neil went to visit a doctor and isn't at home." Klein forced a smile.

He hadn't finished his sentence when a melody came from within the building. It was the music from a piano. It was like a silent lake veiled by a thin mist beneath the moonlight.

Dunn's expression became abnormally stern and grave. Klein's heart sank as well.

Just as he was about to do another divination, he suddenly saw liquid flowing out from the gap beneath the door.

The stream of liquid was transparent and pure at first, before it became dyed crimson, a crimson similar to that of blood. It was an intensely dark crimson red.

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CHAPTER 164
MISERABLE WRETCHES

The color of fresh blood was reflected in Klein's eyes as they intently locked onto the flowing liquid.

Just then, there was a light cough from within the house. Old Neil spoke with a raspy voice, "Dunn, why are you here?"

Dunn's gray eyes were extremely deep. His mellow voice replied calmly, "I heard that you're sick, so we came to visit."

There was a sudden silence in the house. A few seconds later, Old Neil roared in anger and terror, "No! You're lying!"

Without waiting for Klein and company to say a word, his tone suddenly became weak.

"Yes, I know my condition isn't quite right."

Old Neil… Klein closed his eyes, but the bloody liquid that was seeping through the gap of the door didn't cease.

Then, Old Neil raised his voice and said, "All this time, I've never hurt anyone, nor have I thought of hurting anyone! I never—I never betrayed the secrets of the Nighthawks, one even one! At the most—at the most, I've made claims for undeserving expenses. I really haven't committed any evil!"

"Klein!" He suddenly shouted like he usually did. "I told you about the maxim of the Mystery Pryers, 'Do as you wish, but do no harm.' I still live

by this saying. I'd rather be patient—I'd rather endure than do things that will harm others…"

With that said, he pleaded sincerely, in fear, "Dunn, Royale, Klein, go back. Go back. Wait till tomorrow—by tomorrow, I'll be back to normal. I swear—I swear to the Goddess, I wouldn't harm anyone. Really!"

Dunn closed his eyes and asked extremely gently, "What do you plan on doing? What have you been trying to do all this while?"

"Me?" Old Neil was confused at first before he described with a tone filled with hope, "I'm trying to resurrect Celeste. Dunn, I found a way, I'm on the right track!

"You should have heard about it. Back then, I made a mistake during the ritualistic magic to treat her illness, so I failed. I failed to save her. I now know it was because I had yet to master mysticism. But now, I now have enough knowledge and experience to complete everything! It's regrettable that I wasn't inspired by the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and Daly's example. I missed the best opportunity. If-if I was a High-Sequence Beyonder, all of this would become extremely easy." As he spoke, Old Neil's voice sounded tearful, "No, I cannot give up again… Dunn, go back. Go back, please. I beg of you."

Klein clenched his teeth as he heard the Captain ask emotionally, "How do you plan on resurrecting Celeste?"

Old Neil instantly became very excited.

"I'll use the 'Alchemical Life' method to create an immortal body for her. Dunn, you might not know of it, but Sequence 4 Beyonders from the Church of Mother Earth are good at this. The corresponding Sequence in the Savant pathway can barely do it as well. Yes, I will complete it with the aid of God's favor.

"Then, I'll summon her spirit from the spirit world and pray for God's help to combine her spirit and body together.

"Isn't it a great idea?"

Dunn lifted the corner of his lips forcefully and said, "Yes, it's a great idea. Old Neil, let us in. Perhaps we can help you."

"… Dunn, are you still not willing to let me off the hook?" Old Neil pleaded, "Go back, just go back. I'll return to normal tomorrow, really. Dunn, I swear I'll never steal your coffee beans again. Klein, Royale, I swear I won't make you help me with my undeserved claims! Really!"

In Klein's and Royale's blurry vision, Dunn lowered his head before lifting it up again. "Old Neil, you're misunderstanding. We're here to visit you. You are our teammate. You're sick, and you aren't well. We definitely needed to visit you. Open the door. Let us see you, so that we can be certain. If you're really okay, we'll return immediately. As you know, there are especially many missions recently. We have to monitor the asylum while we take care of various other sudden incidents."

Old Neil hesitated for a moment before saying, "There's really nothing serious about my condition, really. I'll recover by tomorrow."

The bloody water that flowed out through the gap under the door went down the stairs, towards the stone path, and onto the garden's soil.

"Old Neil, we've known each other for about fifteen years now, right? We've worked on countless missions together. I'm really concerned and worried for you. I have to see you with my own eyes before I'll be at ease," Dunn said gently.

"… Alright," Old Neil pouted. "There's really nothing wrong with me."

With a creak, the door opened slowly. Klein quickly wiped his eyes and allowed his sight to return to normal.

Then, he saw that the carpet in the lobby was red and sticky, covered in blood and hair.

He looked forward and up, only to realize that the living room's floor, ceiling, round table, piano, and chairs were all covered in the same disgusting, sticky and hairy liquid.

Old Neil's head hung in the air, connected to the ceiling by a thick liquid. His forehead and cheeks each had a pair of eyes. They were cold and ruthless eyes with no eyelashes.

The piano's keys were dancing on their own, playing a melodious tune.

"Dunn, look. I'm really okay," Old Neil said with a radiant smile. "Royale, Klein, you think so too, right?"

The moment he opened his mouth, Klein saw the same thick, hairy, and bloody liquid flowing inside it.

Dunn's gray eyes shimmered as he chatted like everything was normal.

"Old Neil, where did you learn the Alchemical Life and resurrection ritual from?"

Old Neil replied excitedly, "I heard it. I tried the first part, and confirmed its authenticity! It's a gift from God! He kept describing it in my ears. He kept describing, He is—He is…"

Old Neil's voice came to a halt. More than ten seconds later, he continued in fear and in apparent loss, "He is the Hidden Sage…"

*The Hidden Sage? Isn't that the non-anthropomorphic god that the Moses Ascetic Order believes in? The god that was resurrected, bringing about evil and corruption… The Moses Ascetic Order has the complete Mystery Pryer Sequence… *Klein's heart stirred as many thoughts came to him.

Upon mentioning the Hidden Sage, Old Neil seemed to finally awaken. He looked around vacantly and observed everything.

In the indescribable silence, his six eyes looked towards Dunn, and he said with a bitter smile, "So it turns out—it turns out that I've already become a monster…"

Without waiting for Dunn and the others to reply, Old Neil suddenly revealed a smile, one of groveling, fear, and cowardice.

"Let me go. I'll go deep into the mountains and won't appear again. I'll never harm anyone. I'll only attempt my ritual quietly, really. Let me go, please. I beg of you."

Just then, Klein felt something illusory shatter before his eyes.

Then, Old Neil's four cold-looking lashless eyes flashed with a dark glow and locked onto Dunn. His expression suddenly turned cold.

"You're pulling me into a dream!

"No, it's useless! My eyes can see through all of that!"

The sticky blood that covered the ceiling, floor, and walls started squirming, like a giant opening its mouth to swallow Klein and company. Old Neil's head grew blurry like overlapping afterimages.

Klein didn't fumble for his revolver; instead, he extended his hand into his pocket and planned to use his Slumber Charm.

Suddenly, everything calmed down before him. The sticky, bloody liquid suddenly turned placid like a still lake.

Old Neil lost his coldness, hatred, desire, and all other expressions. He became quiet and peaceful.

It was unknown when Dunn had thrown Sealed Artifact 3-0611 into the blood.

The four lashless eyes on Old Neil's forehead and cheeks slowly closed, seemingly having lost the desire to keep them open.

Any living creature that came into contact with the Peaceful Hair Strands would turn peaceful and lose all motivation until the end of their life.

Dunn, Klein, and Royale drew their guns at the same time and aimed at Old Neil's head.

Then, Old Neil revealed a look of extreme fear. He was struggling, his strong desire to live fought against the effects of Sealed Artifact 3-0611.

The four extra eyes disappeared. The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth were still deep, his hair was still white, his crimson eyes were still turbid, just like when Klein had first met him.

"Dunn, do you remember the time I saved you…

"Royale, do you remember when I helped you redeem your family's lives…

"Klein, do you remember how I taught you mysticism every day? Do you remember when we talked about how to make claims? Do you remember how I made you hand-ground coffee? Do you remember when we fought against a Mandated Punisher Rampager?"

…

The illusory pleading echoed in Klein's ears, and his right hand that was holding the revolver trembled. He found it difficult to pull the trigger.

Bang! Bang!

The two silver demon hunting bullets flew out and penetrated Old Neil's head one after another.

Klein watched as the familiar, abnormal face revealed a hopeless expression. He saw the man's skull tear open, the red and white within spurting in all directions.

The sticky blood that coated their surroundings started shrinking as it flowed back into Old Neil's broken head that had fallen to the ground. Dunn and Royale lowered their guns simultaneously, and all was silent.

Klein looked at everything before him—Old Neil's "corpse" was becoming a ball of rotten flesh. He saw that there was a pair of eyes, crimson and crystal clear, yet incredibly pained amidst the blood and flesh.

He felt like everything that had happened was just a dream and found it impossible to bring himself into believing the sequence of events and how it had ended.

He stood dumbfounded as he saw Dunn take two steps forward, his figure stooped.

Dunn looked at Old Neil's "corpse" and muttered heavily, "We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

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CHAPTER 165
EPITAPH

"We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

Dunn's words echoed throughout Old Neil's house. They reverberated across the corroded floor, the walls, and ceiling, as well as within Klein's mind and soul.

He'd never had a stronger impression of that sentence than the one he had now.

He felt that he wouldn't forget this feeling for as long as he lived, even if he were to return to Earth.

Amidst the still atmosphere, Dunn walked towards Old Neil's "corpse" and kneeled down. He took out a white handkerchief from the pocket of his windbreaker and covered it over the dark red, crystalline eyeball which looked pained.

At this moment, Klein noticed that the keys of the piano had stopped moving. A faint, translucent figure appeared.

This… Klein, who had activated his Spirit Vision before entering the house, froze.

He hadn't noticed this strange "soul" until now!

Was it because he was distracted by Old Neil, or was it due to Old Neil's abilities after he lost control? Klein saw the formless figure evaporate

quickly, vanishing before his very eyes. He had a faint idea of what was going on.

Suppressing the heavy feeling in his heart, he heard the Captain order, "Search Old Neil's house carefully for possible clues."

"Alright." When Klein spoke, it took him a minute to recognize his own voice. His voice was raspy and deep, as if he had the flu.

"Alright," Royale also replied.

*The condition of her voice is about the same as mine… It's like our nostrils are blocked… *Klein looked at his female teammate, who typically didn't have much of an expression. It was as if he was knowing her for the first time.

Placing his cane on an umbrella rack near the door, he made his way around Sealed Artifact 3-0611. He took heavy steps into the living room and up to the second floor. He then searched every room for possible clues.

Old Neil employed someone to clean the rooms regularly, so the rooms weren't as messy as one would expect of a bachelor. Everything was in order, as if there was a female presence in the house.

Half an hour later, Klein found a few handwritten notes on a bookshelf in Old Neil's room. The notes recorded a weird, mysterious ritual:

"Alchemical Life.

"The materials required include: 100ml of spring water from the Spring of Elves (Golden Spring on Sonia Island), 50 grams of Star Crystal, half a pound of pure gold, 5 grams of phlogiston, 30 grams of red iron… And a large quantity of fresh blood from living people."

Old Neil annotated beneath the part about fresh blood from the living.

"I can consider drawing my own blood, accumulating it little by little and preserve it using ritualistic magic."

I can consider drawing my own… Klein closed his eyes and crushed the notes.

…

On Thursday morning at nine, the time of the moon. Raphael Cemetery.

Klein was wearing his black formal suit and holding onto his cane. He stood silently in a corner of the cemetery.

He had stuffed a neat white handkerchief in his breast pocket and was holding onto a Slumber flower.

Dunn, Frye, Leonard, and Kenley were carrying a black coffin that stored Old Neil's corpse. They slowly walked to the front of the tombstone and silently lowered it into the grave.

As she saw the brown soil being tossed into the grave, Rozanne, who was wearing a black dress and a white flower in her hair, wept.

"Can someone tell me if this is all happening for real?

"Why did he lose control, why did he consume the potion, why did he become a Beyonder, why must there be wraiths and monsters, why is there no safer way? Why, why, why…"

Klein silently listened on until Old Neil's coffin was completely buried in the soil, until all signs that he existed were buried deep within the earth.

"May the Goddess bless you." He drew a crimson moon in front of his chest, then took a few steps forward and placed the Slumber flower in front of the tomb.

"May the Goddess bless you." Dunn, Frye, and the others tapped at their chests in a clockwise fashion.

Klein looked up, straightened his back, and saw the black and white photograph on the tombstone.

Old Neil was wearing his classic black hat; his white hair was peeking out around the edges. The wrinkles beside his eyes and mouth were deep, his dark red eyes a little turbid.

He was so peaceful, no longer feeling grief, pain, or fear.

There was an epitaph carved underneath the photograph. It came from the contents of the last entry in Old Neil's diary: "If I cannot save her, then I shall accompany her."

The morning breeze blew gently. The silence and emptiness of the Raphael Cemetery hung over everyone.

…

In the afternoon, Klein took a form signed by the Captain to the armory.

He opened the half-closed door and saw Bredt with a thick, black beard behind the table.

Klein froze visibly before handing the form over.

"Fifty rounds of ordinary bullets."

During his request, he glanced at the tin can on the table. He felt as though he could smell the fragrance of the hand-ground coffee and hear the cheeky words in his ears, "But why must you wait till you have spare cash? You can apply to Dunn and get him to approve of the expenses!"

…

Bredt noticed Klein's expression and sighed.

"I can understand what you're feeling right now. I, myself, cannot believe that Old Neil would leave us like that. Sometimes, I even feel as though this is a dream conjured by the Captain."

"Perhaps this is the destiny of many Nighthawks," Klein replied with a bitter smile.

After this incident, he felt much more disappointment and hatred toward the upper echelons of the Church for keeping the "acting method" a secret.

"Let's hope that there will be fewer such tragedies, may the Goddess bless us." Bredt drew a crimson moon in front of his chest. He took the application form and walked into the armory.

…

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The smell of gunpowder filled the air. Klein vented his frustrations onto the target he was shooting at, until he finished shooting the bullets that he had requested. He then collected himself and took a public carriage to Gawain's house.

He completed sets upon sets of exercises, as if he was torturing himself, until Gawain told him to stop.

"Combat practice isn't there for you to harm yourself." Gawain looked at Klein with his turbid green eyes.

"I'm sorry, Teacher. I'm a little down today." Klein exhaled and attempted to explain.

"What happened?" Gawain asked without a ripple of emotion.

Klein thought for a moment, then gave a simple reply, "A friend of mine passed away suddenly."

Gawain was silent for a few seconds. He stroked his blond mustache and said with a fleeting voice, "I once lost 325 friends in the span of five minutes, amongst them were 10 that I could trust with my life."

Klein sighed in realization. "That is the cruelty of war."

Gawain shot a glance at him and let out a self-deprecating laugh.

"The cruelest thing of all is the fact that I can never exact revenge for them. I can never fulfill their dreams, and the answer eludes me forever.

"As for you, you still have such a chance. Even though I don't exactly know what happened, I know that you're still young. You still have many opportunities."

Klein was silent for a moment. He took in a breath and collected himself.

"Thank you, Teacher."

Gawain nodded and said without any expression, "Take a ten-minute break, then do ten more sets of the exercises you were doing just now."

"…" Klein was momentarily unsure what expression he should show.

…

Friday morning, in the recreation room of the Nighthawks.

Klein, Seeka Tron, and Frye were seated around the round table, but they weren't playing cards. One of them was flipping through newspapers, the other was looking out the oriel windows in a daze, and the last was holding onto a pen, wanting to write something but failing to do so.

The room was quiet. No one spoke, and no one joked around. The atmosphere was heavy.

Phew… Klein exhaled. He lowered his newspaper and planned to focus on reading the materials he had found.

At that moment, Dunn Smith knocked and entered the room. He looked around before saying, "Klein, come out for a moment."

What happened? Klein, who had a premonition of what was happening, stood up and made his way out of the recreation room.

Dunn stood at the entrance of the stairway leading to the basement. He turned and looked at Klein.

"The person that the Holy Cathedral sent is here."

The person examining me is here? Klein's nerves tensed.

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CHAPTER 166
EXAMINATION

There was a cold breeze blowing from the basement, providing a hint of relief for Klein's tense emotions.

*It's finally here. *

Once I pass this stage, I won't have to worry about being examined like this for at least half a year…

Once I advance to Sequence 8 and become a so-called "Clown," I'll possess actual combat strength. With the aid of divination and my Flaring Sun Charms for backup, I'll have a chance of surviving even more relatively dangerous situations…

Since I was waiting for the Holy Cathedral's examination, I haven't even dared to withdraw the three hundred pounds that Miss Justice transferred to the anonymous account. Just in case they audit my financial situation and find out that I'm in possession of a large sum of money from an unknown source…

…

Just as Klein's thoughts flashed through his mind uncontrollably, Dunn Smith smoothed his sleeve and said in a low voice, "The person in charge of the examination is one of the nine high-ranking deacons of the Nighthawks, Crestet Cesimir. The Holy Cathedral attaches great importance to you."

"A high-ranking deacon?" Klein blurted in surprise.

In general terms, the thirteen archbishops and nine high-ranking deacons made up the upper echelons of the church. It was said that there was no lack of High-Sequence Beyonders among them!

The twenty-two ladies and gentlemen were all equal in terms of their rankings. They only followed the orders of the Evernight Goddess, and they were only answerable to the Pope.

Dunn took a whiff of the cold wind from the basement before nodding faintly.

"Yes, he's a high-ranking deacon. But you don't have to be nervous. Crestet is only a Sequence 5, and has yet to enter a demigod state. So, you don't have to be too afraid or reverent.

"Oh, his title in the Beyonder world is the 'Goddess's Sword.' As he possesses a holy item, his combat strength is similar to a newly advanced Sequence 4 Beyonder.

"I just chatted with him. He was very friendly."

If I read between the lines, Captain is telling me that he only said what was necessary. He doesn't want me to be nervous and go according to the plan… Klein nodded thoughtfully and asked, "Where should I met the high-ranking deacon?"

"The alchemy room where we concoct potions," Dunn replied simply, as a hint of gloominess flashed across his face.

The alchemy room where we concoct potions? The laboratory where Old Neil made my Seer potion? Klein slowly let out a breath and returned to the Nighthawks recreation room and took his outerwear from the clothes rack.

He put on the black windbreaker, placed his hands into his pockets, and walked down the winding stairs that connected to the basement. Then, he took a left turn at the cross junction.

Very quickly, Klein saw a secret door under the light of the elegant gas lamps that lined the walls. He saw that the long tables in the room had been moved aside to open up a large space in the center of the room.

There were two classic high back chairs facing each other with less than a meter in-between them.

There was a man in his thirties wearing a black windbreaker and a white shirt seated on the chair that was facing the door.

His golden-brown hair was cut very short, and his blackish-green eyes were as dark as a forest on a moonless night. The collars of his shirt and windbreaker were put up, and his entire chin was hidden within the shadows.

"Hello, Your Grace." Klein bowed.

Crestet Cesimir had his right leg crossed over his left as he leisurely leaned back into his chair. He smiled and replied, "Hello, Klein. You may sit over there."

He pointed at the high back chair opposite him.

By the side of his leg was a suitcase made of silver. It was about the size of a violin case.

It can carry a sword with an appropriate length… Klein walked forward and sat at his appointed seat.

Crestet rested his right index finger on his upper lip as he thought for a few seconds.

"I plan to first examine how well you've mastered your potion. That's not a problem, right?"

"Not at all." Klein shook his head with utmost confidence.

"Very confident." Crestet smiled, but maintained his previous posture. All he did was intently watch Klein.

Klein suddenly felt the light from the surrounding gas lamps vanish, as though they were swallowed by the rich darkness.

He suddenly became exhausted, as though his biological clock had struck the time for sleep.

But, his mind was extremely tense, making it impossible to relax. It was just like when he was unable to sleep peacefully due to over-exhaustion.

The silent "night" filled his surroundings as Klein heard the noise of dripping water from a tap that wasn't closed properly. Then, he heard the conversations in the Blackthorn Security Company and the movement of the wind blowing through the stairway.

Besides that, he didn't see anything that he shouldn't see, nor did he hear any noises that he shouldn't be able to hear.

"Excellent." Crestet's hypnotic voice dispersed the darkness, and the light from the gas lamps inside and outside the alchemy room came into Klein's sight again.

Klein suddenly shook off his exhaustion and returned to his previous energetic self.

*He affected me without me realizing it… Is that what a Sequence 5 Beyonder is capable of? This is the horror of a high-ranking deacon? *He recalled what had happened and felt a little frightened.

Crestet Cesimir clasped his hands and put them on his knees. He bent down slightly, and his lips were blocked by his collar.

"You passed the test. You achieved a level beyond outstanding in your mastery of your potion.

"I'll need to observe to see if there are any hidden dangers in your mind, to make sure that the potion's remaining spirit hasn't changed your character subconsciously or left some problems behind.

"You have three minutes to prepare."

Klein immediately nodded and said, "Alright."

He secretly took a breath and allowed himself to enter Cogitation to remove various negative thoughts.

Crestet didn't speak again. He took out a silver pocket watch from the inner pocket of his black windbreaker and flipped it open.

Then, he attentively watched the second hand move.

Three minutes later, Crestet closed his pocket watch and said with a smile, "I'll begin singing."

Singing? Klein wore a look of confusion.

Before Klein could reply, Crestet started humming a lovely melody.

The melody reverberated in the alchemy room and gradually lost its harmony and went out of tune.

Squeak! Scratch! Zing! Klein heard the noise akin to the scratching of blackboards with nails, the sound of bubble wrap rubbing against each other, electric drills drilling, and various other annoying noises.

The noises intensified and turned more and more chaotic. They made him want to vent his frustrations and cause destruction.

But Klein, who frequently experienced the mad ravings and terrifying screams, restrained his urges very quickly.

He displayed annoyance, tension, frustration, and insecurity at appropriate times.

Being in too perfect of a state would end up being a problem!

It was unknown when Crestet Cesimir had stopped singing. The noises in the alchemy room disappeared and room the was awash with tranquility and silence.

Silence sure is great! Klein exclaimed in his head.

"Very good, excellent. There are no latent problems in your soul. Of course, if you wanted to beat me up or stuff my mouth with something, that's only normal." Crestet's mouth was blocked by his collar so Klein could only determine his emotions through his tone.

"No, I wouldn't dare," Klein admitted honestly.

Crestet smiled and said, "Congratulations, you have passed all the tests. Now it's time for the question and answer session."

His green eyes suddenly darkened. His gaze was deep, as though he could see through flesh, and looked directly at the spirit.

"Go ahead," Klein replied, sitting straight.

Crestet maintained his earlier posture and casually asked, "You said that your experience in the Divination Club allowed you to quickly master the potion?"

"Yes," Klein answered frankly but didn't describe further.

Crestet nodded slightly and said, "And you said that your inspiration came from the maxim of the Mystery Pryers and also Daly's example?"

"Yes." Klein confirmed this first before explaining in detail, "I found out from one of my teammates who was a Mystery Pryer that those who abide by the maxim of the Mystery Pryers have a lower probability of losing control than normal. After that, I heard that Madam Daly once said that she wanted to be a real Spirit Medium, and that she is a genius that leveled up to Sequence 7 within two years.

"After noticing both situations, I thought I could give it a try, I attempted to be a real Seer and outlined some principles for a Seer. The outcome was better than I expected. I mastered the potion very quickly. Your Grace, I'm not sure if you have had a similar experience. When I fully mastered the potion, there was a very special, very magical feeling…" Klein described his experience as if he only vaguely understood the "acting method."

The man he had been when he was on earth would've been nervous and embarrassed to speak so many half-lies before such a powerful Nighthawk. But ever since he transmigrated to the current world, he had lied so much that he was used to it. He could do it flawlessly.

The darkness in Crestet's eyes disappeared, and his gaze returned to normal. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, it's not an illusion."

From his answer, Klein couldn't see any doubt or scrutiny, so he felt at ease.

"Dunn endorsed your experience. I believe that you really are a genius, with a logical mind and sharp senses," Crestet complimented. He then asked, "Did you share your experience with your teammates?"

"Of course," Klein admitted frankly. "I hope that I can help them lower the risk of losing control. We're teammates, comrades that face danger together. I don't have any reason to hide the truth. But for the same reason, I didn't tell the clerks."

Crestet uncrossed his right leg and sat up straight. His thin lips were exposed from the shadow of his collar.

He lifted the corner of his lips and said, "Although you haven't even been with the Nighthawks for two months, I believe your understanding towards partners is much better than many others.

"Hmm, I plan to share more information with you, but according to the Holy Cathedral's rules, you have to swear to the Goddess that you won't reveal the contents of our conversation to anyone that doesn't know about this.

"That should be fine, right?"

I passed the test? Klein was delighted. He nodded without hesitation.

"No problem!"

Although I won't be able to teach others the "acting method," I can let Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man do so indirectly!

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CHAPTER 167
HOLY ARTIFACT

"Alright." Crestet Cesimir nodded. He leaned forward. "Then swear upon the Holy Artifact."

As he was saying this, he bent down to lift the silver suitcase by his foot.

*Holy Artifact? The Holy Artifact that earned you the title of the Goddess's Sword? *Klein looked at the actions of the deacon curiously.

Crestet placed the suitcase on his knees, his dark green eyes instantly turning black.

He lifted his hand then pressed down. The cover of the silver suitcase which resembled a violin case suddenly dissolved and receded like the tide.

At the same time, Klein felt that the light around him was being drawn forward as if it was being absorbed by the suitcase.

Apart from the lights from the classic lamps that lined the walls, as well as the silver splendor that spiraled within the suitcase, the alchemy room turned pitch dark. The scene looked extremely strange.

Pa!

WIth a crisp snapping sound, Crestet Cesimir opened the suitcase, revealing the pure white bone sword that lay within.

Yes, a bone sword. The moment Klein saw the sword, he knew instinctively that it was mainly made out of bone!

The short sword silently released a pure white glow in the pitch dark alchemy room, as if it were a moon hanging high in the night sky, or a lighthouse in the middle of a storm.

It looked as though the sword had no defects on its surface, but a closer examination would reveal that the surface of the sword was laced with layers of symbols and icons. These mysterious patterns intertwined to form the body of the sword.

Klein observed the holy sword, suddenly realizing that he couldn't look away!

His vision was being drawn towards the sword as his brown eyes slowly lost their luster.

Crestet lifted the suitcase, moving the sword away from its original position.

Klein instantly snapped out of his trance and finally freed himself from the nightmare he couldn't escape before.

He cast his gaze to the side and asked gravely, "Your Grace, do you need me to put my hand on the holy sword?"

"Yes, come over." Crestet's voice was melodious as if he was singing a lullaby.

Klein stood up, still looking to the side as he took small steps forward. As it was dark, he couldn't see where the legs of the deacon were, nor his old leather boots.

"Stop," Crestet spoke calmly.

Klein immediately halted and stood on the spot. He took a quick glance at the pure white bone sword through the corner of his eyes before retracting his gaze again, in fear.

With that mere glance, he bent down and extended his right hand, accurately placing it atop the holy sword.

A cold feeling swept through his skin and into his mind. The distracting thoughts and feelings of worry instantly eased, as if he was sitting on a roof in a noisy village, smelling the scent of the harvest and admiring the starry night sky.

"Recite after me," Crestet said solemnly.

"Alright." Klein nodded.

He then heard the deacon speak in Hermes.

"Oh Evernight Goddess, nobler than the stars and more eternal than eternity.

"I swear to you in my real name and my spirituality.

"I, Klein, will never reveal the details of the 'acting method' to those who do not know of it from this moment forth.

"If I go against this, I shall accept any punishment you deem fit.

"Please witness my oath."

Klein collected himself and made the oath in Hermes, following Deacon Cesimir's lead.

He had the faint feeling that a connection has been established between him and a faraway being through the pure white bone sword.

After retracting his right hand, he drew a crimson moon on his chest.

"Praise the Lady!"

"Praise the Lady!" Crestet smiled and bowed in response.

Immediately, he closed the cover of the suitcase and pressed down heavily with his right hand.

The darkness was instantly lit up as the light from the lamp once again filled the entire room.

Klein noticed that the black eyes of Deacon Cesimir had regained their usual blackish-green.

He made his way back to his chair and frowned. He asked in puzzlement, "Acting method?"

Crestet cleared his throat. Without answering the question directly, he instead smiled and said, "You might feel a little confused and not understand what I'm about to tell you, but I cannot explain why that is so, for that involves the secrets of the Church."

You will only have the right to know after you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon… Klein looked at Cesimir and added inwardly before Cesimir could say it.

"You will only be permitted to know after you become a core member of the Church, such as an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon," Crestet emphasized.

Klein nodded sternly.

Crestet placed the silver suitcase back beside his foot and crossed his legs.

"In the long history of time, the Church has had generations upon generations of genius Beyonders slowly figuring out a way to avoid losing control.

"And the core to this method is the name of the potion. It's not only critical; it's also the key."

After looking at Klein's thoughtful expression, Crestet continued, "We have realized that the names of the potions all point to a certain group, and this group has their own approach and operates in unique ways. In simpler terms, there are a set of rules that come with the name of the potion, different rules for different potions. When we follow these rules strictly, the risk of losing control is reduced to a minimum."

"Similar to my set of Seer principles?" Klein took the opportunity to ask.

*This explanation isn't as simple or understandable as the one I gave to Justice and Hanged Man… *Klein silently criticized.

"Yes." Crestet gave an affirmative answer. "When we follow the rules of the potion, we become more and more like the group described by the name of the potion. In other words, we are acting as the job that the name of the potion points us toward. That is the 'acting method.' You must remember, the spirituality of every individual is special, unique. Even though the core rules must be followed by the people who consume the same potion, there are always certain variations to the rules that are unique to the individual. Thus, the experiences of others can only serve as a guide."

That is a point that I didn't realize… Klein said sincerely, "Thank you for informing me. I will remember that."

Crestet laughed.

"These are the experiences accumulated over the generations.

"After using the 'acting method,' we not only gain mastery over the potion, we're also digesting it, just as we would our food. When you truly digest the potion, you will feel a unique, mysterious sensation, understood?"

"I understand. 'Digestion,' this term is very appropriate…" Klein pretended to be deep in thought.

After Crestet explained the method in more detail, Klein weighed his words as he asked, "Your Grace, since the name of the potion is not only the core, but also the key, then how did the first Beyonders obtain them? I heard that it was recorded on the Blasphemy Slate?"

"Yes, that is correct," Crestet replied frankly. "But the Blasphemy Slate was inscribed with the ancient names. The names of the potions which we use today were derived in part from divine revelations. Some were also consolidated by the experiences of the Beyonders themselves."

Klein nodded slowly. He pursed his lips and asked, "Your Grace, since the 'acting method' is so effective, why wouldn't the Church tell every Nighthawk about it?"

"I have said that it is a secret of the Church. You will understand the reason behind it once you become an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon," Crestet answered, unfazed. "Alright, return upstairs and tell the rest of the Nighthawks to come down one at a time. I have to carry out the final step of the examination."

That's to keep Frye and the others from divulging the 'acting method'? Klein thought as he stood up, he then bade farewell, following the Nighthawks' etiquette.

He made his way past the corridor and up the stairs, returning to the Blackthorn Security Company. He saw Dunn smoking his pipe near the entrance of the basement.

With a smile, Klein took the initiative to say, "There shouldn't be any more problems; His Grace wants me to inform Frye and the others to head down for a conversation with him."

"Yes, that is the last step. That means that there were no problems." Dunn put away his pipe and headed to the recreation room to tell the rest.

As he watched Frye and Seeka enter the basement, Klein suddenly recalled something. He said in a hurry, "Captain, are we going to have to get Royale who's guarding over Chanis Gate, and Leonard who's watching over the asylum? Oh, and Kenley, who's on break."

Dunn froze and pinched his forehead.

"I forgot…"

He paused for a moment, then chortled. "But the matter shouldn't be too complicated. One of the advantages of having a high-ranking deacon examine you is that there's no need to send a telegraph to the Holy Cathedral, or engage in a cumbersome exchange of letters. He can make the decision on the spot and hand the formula to the Clown potion as well as the main ingredients to you."

"That's not too bad." Klein couldn't contain his excitement.

…

An hour and a half passed. As Kenley walked out of the alchemy room, his expression full of puzzlement, Klein was once again called downstairs. He met the high-ranking deacon once again, the Goddess's Sword, Crestet Cesimir, a second time.

This time, the golden-brown-haired and blackish-green-eyed deacon wasn't seated. He stood there, allowing the breeze in the basement to blow at his black windbreaker.

Crestet's collars stood tall, hiding his chin in the shadows.

He looked at Klein and smiled.

"Nighthawk Klein Moretti, I announce in the name of the Goddess that you have passed the examination of the Holy Cathedral.

"Congratulations. With your contributions, you can immediately advance to become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!"

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CHAPTER 168
CLOWN POTION

Phew, I finally passed… I passed it just like that…

When Klein heard Crestet Cesimir's announcement, he let out a breath of relief despite being mentally prepared for it. It felt surreal, as though it was a dream.

He had assumed that the examination would be tougher and lengthier, but when he thought carefully about it, he realized that what had just happened was what should've happened. If he had taken the normal three years to digest the Seer potion instead of doing it in a month, the examination wouldn't have even been conducted by the Holy Cathedral. The Tingen Nighthawks' captain would've been responsible for it instead.

*I thought they would investigate my family and friends… Hmm, perhaps Cesimir arrived in Tingen two days ago and completed that in secret… I also thought that the examination would require me to complete some task. Heh, I was really overthinking it. The goal of the examination is merely to determine the level of digestion for the potion, as well as detect any latent dangers, and see whether I'm aware of the "acting method" and if I shared my experience with others… *These thoughts flew past Klein's mind. He flashed a sincere smile.

"Thank you, Your Grace. Praise the Lady!"

Crestet nodded gently and said, "To advance is to serve the Goddess better, so that you can protect our fellow believers better. You must remember this —trust me—it'll help you fight the temptation of losing control."

"Temptation…" Klein ruminated over the word.

Crestet sized Klein up with his green eyes and said sternly, "The 'acting method' can help you digest the potion and lower the risk of losing control, but it's not the be-all and end-all. To a certain extent, you can even confuse playing the role and your own existence. You know, there are many actors in the theater that develop severe psychological issues. At a certain level, you might really go insane."

Remember that you're only acting… The only point of note concluded by the City of Silver is identical to what Deacon Cesimir said… Klein nodded thoughtfully in agreement.

"In addition," Crestet emphasized, "Not only is losing control related to the potion, it's also closely related to your emotions and mental health. The most important thing for a Beyonder is to control yourself. Only then will you be able to withstand the temptations of evil gods and devils, resisting emotions like greed and jealousy, and the erosion of desire. Of course, I don't mean that you should get rid of all your emotions and desires, because that is something that no human or even demigod can do. Yes, perhaps only some special Sequences are able to achieve that sort of state."

Klein suddenly thought about Old Neil. He couldn't help but ask in reply, "We must keep our emotions and desires at a reasonable level, and not allowing them to drive us to do something irrational and abnormal?"

Crestet nodded solemnly.

"Yes."

After he answered, there were wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

"That's all I wanted to warn you about. Now, I'll pass you the Clown potion formula and the relevant ingredients."

He bent down and put his silver suitcase on the long table. He then turned around and moved a few steps, blocking Klein's view.

When the surrounding lights strangely vanished again, Klein suddenly understood that the formula and ingredients were in the suitcase that stored the holy artifact. It was simply because his gaze was attracted by the pure white bone sword which was why he didn't notice or perhaps, he couldn't notice, the other items in the suitcase.

After a few minutes, the light of the gas lamps lit up the alchemy room again. Crestet picked up his suitcase and moved away, presenting the items on the long table to Klein.

Among them, the most eye-catching item was the palm-sized gray goat horn. It looked like a miniature version of a normal goat horn and was crystal clear, swirling with colors. There were faint layers of unique patterns.

Next to the goat horn was a blue rose. There were red veins on the petals that connecting them together. It seemed to form a human face with a smile.

Hahaha, *woowoowoo*, *hahaha*, *woowoowoo*… Klein heard illusory laughter and crying diffused with each other, and he saw pieces of gray halos floating in midair.

*A crystal of the single horn of a matured Hornacis gray mountain goat and a complete stalk of a human-faced rose. The main ingredients of the Clown potion! *He nodded indiscernibly and took a few steps towards the long table.

"80 milliliters of pure water, 5 drops of tornapple juice, 7 grams of black-rimmed sunflower powder, 10 grams of golden cloak grass powder, 3 drops of poison hemlock…" Klein looked at the unfurled goatskin parchment and compared the written content with the formula that he had memorized.

After he confirmed that there was nothing wrong, he recalled the demonstration Old Neil did.

He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly to collect his emotions. With the apparatus in the alchemy room, he distilled some pure water needed by the potion.

In the potion formula, pure water referred to water that was distilled over and over again.

Then, he washed a black metal pot and threw in the supplementary ingredients one after another. He was as skillful as back when he had done chemistry experiments in high school.

As the Beyonder ingredients hadn't catalyzed just yet, he didn't see any obvious changes in the liquid in the metal pot. At most, he only saw powder floating on the surface of the liquid.

When he was done with the preparations, Klein cast his gaze at the two main ingredients and gratefully thought, *There's no description of the exact size or weight of the required gray mountain goat's single horn crystal or the human-faced rose. Perhaps a whole horn and a complete rose have no differences, regardless of their weight, allowing them to meet the requirements… Yes, in the world of mysterious Beyonders, this is definitely possible…*

If so, I don't have to worry about putting in excessive amounts of the main ingredients!

After a few seconds, Klein picked up the human-faced rose and threw it into the metal pot.

When the strange flower touched the liquid, it immediately produced a sizzling sound. The surrounding illusory laughter became shrill.

Hahaha, hahaha!

Klein didn't delay any further as he immediately grabbed the crystalline mountain goat horn and threw it into the metal pot.

Poof!

The terrifying laughter disappeared all of a sudden, and the surrounding gray halos slowly converged into the metal pot.

Klein lowered his head and saw the liquid in the pot was colored in a mix of gold, yellow, and red. However, the three colors remained extremely distinct at their boundaries.

There were bubbles churning and fizzing from the liquid, but they failed to escape from the pot and ended up bursting silently.

The scene reminded Klein of Sprite, the carbonated drink from his previous incarnation.

This actually looks like a delicious drink… A thought popped into his head that aligned with the characteristics of his culture.

Suppressing his nervousness, excitement, and anticipation, Klein poured the liquid from the black metal pot into a glass bottle.

What shocked him was that there wasn't a single bit of the potion left in the metal pot.

*It really is a potion that turns people into Beyonders… *Klein raised his right hand, and he looked at the beautiful-looking tri-colored liquid.

Crestet Cesimir, who had been silent the entire time, suddenly smiled and said, "Don't worry. At the very least, I didn't notice any problems with the concoction of your potion.

"I've been waiting here to ensure that no accidents happen after you consume the potion. Don't worry, as long as it isn't anything serious, I

should be able to save you."

Okay. Klein nodded and placed the Clown potion back onto the long table.

Then, he took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally, a slight distance above the liquid.

To Beyonders of any other occupation, pendulum divinations could only divine a yes or no answer. Of course, when there wasn't enough information, the divination wouldn't yield any useful answers at all. When the pendulum didn't spin, it was called a failed divination.

As a Seer, Klein's pendulum could also vaguely determine the degree of the "yes" or "no" answer.

Klein's eyes grew dark as he recited, "This potion is harmful.

"This potion is harmful."

…

Seven times later, he opened his half-closed eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise, but very slowly.

Clockwise means a positive response. In other words, it means that the potion is harmful… However, it spins slowly, which means that it's only slightly harmful… Yes, potions can bring about a loss of control, so there's the possibility of harm. A low level of harm means there is nothing wrong with the potion… Klein let out a breath of relief and wound the pendulum on his left wrist before covering it with his sleeve.

At that moment, Crestet couldn't help but sigh.

"… You really are a professional Seer."

"I must fully utilize my advantage, but I can't rely on it too much and think that it's all-powerful," Klein replied softly and took up the Clown potion bottle.

After drinking it, I'll become a Sequence 8 Beyonder…

The thought flashed in his mind and Klein didn't hesitate. He raised the bottle, tipped his head, and gulped down the potion.

Bitter! So bitter!

It sucks, totally!

He instantly realized what it meant to look good on the outside, but rotten on the inside. His face had contorted as a result of the potion. He wanted to puke, but he couldn't.

Then, Klein realized that his face was flushed red. As for the rest of his body, they were experiencing a similar reaction.

He was convinced that he looked like a steamed lobster. As for his spirit and mind, they felt like they had been extracted into a thin needle, fusing with the potion, drop by drop, as it stabbed into each and every one of cells.

It was a feeling that needed no microscope to observe his cells. Klein stood there and "saw" the intruder invade his body's most minute areas.

For a few seconds, he felt like a robot that was having its parts and electrical circuits swapped out.

After an unknown period of time had passed, his mind reflected his figure, as though he was listening to himself singing through his own ears.

Due to this strange projection, Klein discovered that he could precisely control his facial and bodily motions.

Meanwhile, his ears buzzed. He heard the murmurs and shouting echoing around him which had not happened in a while.

Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea… Hornacis… Flegrea…

Phew. Klein imagined the layered spherical light and slowly entered a Cogitation state. Bit by bit, he escaped from the state of having his spirituality seep out where he had a slight loss of control.

At that moment, he knew that he had advanced successfully. He knew that he was a Sequence 8 Clown.

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CHAPTER 169
NEW ABILITIES

After the color in Klein's eyes went back to normal, Crestet Cesimir said with a laugh, "You can move about and try to get used to the changes in your body. Try to find the core powers that were given to you by the Clown potion."

Klein nodded. He considered the fact that he might need guidance from the deacon and thus didn't care about his presence. He repeatedly followed what he had been practicing all this time as he took a step forward. He twisted his hips and threw a punch forward, launching a frontal jab.

Pa!

He heard the crisp sound of his fist breaking the air. The power in the forward thrust exceeded his expectations.

In that instant, he felt as though he was sitting in a carriage which had abruptly hit the brakes. He lost his balance and fell forward.

Oh no! This is about to become an embarrassing story—just like Leonard's… Klein mused. But at that moment, he noticed that he could still effectively control his muscles, his body, as well as his center of gravity!

He simultaneously exerted force with his spine, tendons, and ligaments, instantly adjusting his center of mass and managing to stand firm despite his distorted posture.

Well… Upon gaining some understanding of this, Klein attempted several other actions. He confirmed that the biggest change in his body was the

massive increase in coordination. He would no longer lose his balance unless there were some extenuating circumstances.

I feel like a roly-poly tumbler… I can even act in a circus now! It wouldn't be too hard for me to walk on a rope… The Clown potion sure lives up to its name… Many thoughts flashed through his mind. Klein once again tested the extent of the improvements to his strength, agility, and speed.

Hmm, I should be around the same level as Teacher Gawain. After I get used to this and go through the specialized training, I'll definitely become more powerful… Also, with my current mastery over my body, it would be easy for me to grasp combat techniques. Klein stopped moving and nodded in thought.

According to his plans, he estimated that he would become decent in combat arts only after half a year. But after consuming the Clown potion, he felt that it would only take a month, perhaps two or three weeks, before he could qualify as a policeman that was adept in combat.

That was the difference between an average person and a Beyonder.

In a sense, the talents of Beyonders were beyond the reach of normal humans!

Crestet watched silently as the newly advanced Clown tried out various actions before completely stopping. He then nodded.

"It truly is a potion adept in the field of combat."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he asked, "What sounds did you hear just now?"

"I heard someone muttering Hornacis." Klein wanted to keep the term Flegrea a secret for the time being.

He wanted to observe the reaction of Deacon Cesimir. If he was willing to relay information regarding the Hornacis mountain range and the Nation of the Evernight, Klein would then add on, saying that he heard something different again.

Crestet nodded slightly, skipping over the topic. He reminded Klein, "Remember, a High-Sequence Beyonder can influence corresponding Low-Sequence Beyonders of the same Sequence pathway to a certain extent. In a way, some parts of the respective pathways contain the Realm of Demigods. The murmurings and howls might have been intentionally conveyed to you by them. They might be filled with malicious intent.

"You must be even more cautious if the Sequence pathway belongs to an evil god. I had a chat with Dunn just now. The Nighthawk in your team who lost control recently met with such a situation."

Old Neil… The Hidden Sage… Klein's expression darkened. He nodded solemnly and said, "Your Grace, I will remember this. I will not be tempted by the murmurings or howls. I will not be corrupted by them."

At the same time, he thought of something else.

Could this be the reason why the Church only provides the pathways for Sleepless and Corpse Collector, while hiding a large number of the other pathways? After all, the Sleepless pathway belongs to the Evernight Goddess, and Death which corresponds to the Corpse Collector pathway has already fallen… As for why the Church would still offer the Mystery Pryer and Seer, it's because these two jobs are of a support type and can fill the shortcomings of the Sequence 9 and 8 pathways for Sleepless and Corpse Collector. Furthermore, they're only at the beginning of the pathway, so the influence they can gather wouldn't be too prominent…

But this doesn't explain why they would hide the names and unique traits of the potions… or the lack of information as to what one should take note of when facing them…

Klein retracted his thoughts when he saw Crestet Cesimir pick up his suitcase to leave. He adopted a curious tone.

"Your Grace, I would like to know how to act as a Clown. Do I have to go to a circus?"

Crestet smoothed his tall collar and chuckled.

"According to our current understanding of philosophy, you just made the mistake of formalism.

"You need to understand that the name of a potion not only represents a job. It also represents a group of people that share certain traits. For example, we can also describe Seers differently. We can call them people who can see fate, yet remain respectful of fate. Of course, as I mentioned before, there are some differences to the rules concluded by each individual even if they consumed the same potion. You cannot completely reference the experiences of another person, do you understand?"

Klein nodded in thought.

"I think I can understand some of it. I can act as a Clown in my daily life, as long as I have grasped its essence?"

"In theory," Crestet answered, being careful about his choice of words.

"… I understand." Klein drew a crimson moon on his chest. "Thank you, Your Grace. May the Goddess bless you."

*Hmm, just what is the essence of a Clown? If I don't take into consideration what a clown represents back on Earth and only think about what it means in this world, a clown is a job that entertains people using ridiculous methods. For example, hilarious getups, exaggerated actions, trickster-like performances? The core is that it must be ridiculous, and it must entertain others. It feels a little off… Must I consider it from the

perspective of court jesters from ancient times? *Klein thought about it silently as he felt at a loss.

Crestet looked at him and also drew a crimson moon before his chest.

He smiled, revealing the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

"May the Goddess bless you too."

At that moment, Klein suddenly perceived something, an intuition that felt like a prediction, that Deacon Cesimir would put his left foot forward!

He then saw Crestet pick up the silver suitcase and step toward the entrance of the alchemy room with his left foot!

One step, two steps, three steps. Klein watched as Crestet walked out of the hidden door, his figure vanishing into the corridor.

*This… *He was dazed for a moment before he felt intense excitement.

The Beyonder powers of the Clown potion were more powerful than he imagined!

He could intuitively predict a person's next course of action!

Was the combination of this ability, coupled with his powerful coordination, exceptional agility, and speed, as well as decent strength, considered being good at fighting with artifice? Klein thought about this revelation.

So, this can be considered the manifestation of the Seer's abilities in Sequence 8, but it's not enough… This pathway must be one that gives a unique ability every time I advance before reaching a High-Sequence Beyonder. But the intuitions I get are fleeting, so I don't think I can take advantage of them every single time. Of course, this ability is powerful enough as it is. Taking advantage of it once should be enough to turn defeat into victory… Oh right, after I reduce the influence of the negative effects

that come with the Clown potion, I can try the ritual to summon myself. I nearly forgot about that… Yeah, the Captain must have infected me with his awful memory!

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein observed himself once again. He wanted to see if the Clown potion had brought along any other abilities.

According to the confidential records of the Nighthawks, if the potion would allow the person who consumed it to gain mastery over a certain spell, the person would be able to faintly detect what kinds of spells he obtained after advancing as if he was being instilled with knowledge.

But I don't sense any of that. In other words, Clown doesn't come with the ability to quickly cast spells, as reported in the confidential records of the Nighthawks… Could the meaning of "crafty" be that I can now effectively use my expressions and body language to more easily fool people with my lies? Klein stretched his neck while seriously analyzing his current condition.

At this moment, he couldn't help but think back to the suited clown he had encountered previously. The clown's peculiar and varied spells had left a deep impression.

Hmm, that member of the Secret Order is probably a Sequence 7 Beyonder. His clown getup was purely to mask his facial features to avoid being placed on a wanted list… It's no wonder that he could hold his own against two Sequence 7s and a Sequence 8… If he had deciphered the fact that I wasn't under the influence of Sealed Artifact 2-049 and avoided falling under its control, ten of me might not have been enough to deal with him.

Of course, Clown is not completely devoid of spells. There are still spells like these…

Klein walked toward the long table and picked up the piece of paper that the Clown formula was written on.

His pupils darkened and with a flick of his wrist, he tossed the piece of paper into the air.

Pa!

It was as if the soft piece of paper had become a dagger, and it pierced itself into the wall of the alchemy room!

*I can bring a deck of tarot cards with me in the future. They can be used both for divination or as weapons. *Klein collected himself and started to pack up the objects left behind from the potion's concoction.

After dealing with this and burning the formula for the potion, Klein exhaled and left the alchemy room, closing the secret door behind him.

For the time being, he didn't feel like trying to entertain others through ridiculous methods because of what happened to Old Neil. He intended to lessen the influence of the potion through Cogitation first.

*Phew, this is going to be a brand new experience again… No matter what happens, I'm no longer just a supporting member… Yes, ever since Old Neil passed away, I'm the only one left in the Tingen Nighthawks team that can provide support. The Holy Cathedral will most likely send a Mystery Pryer or a Seer to the team… *Klein followed the wall lamps, walking down the dark corridor, and calmly made his way up the stairs leading to the Blackthorn Security Company.

He then saw the sunlight in the Nighthawks' recreation room.

The sunlight shone in through the oriel window, sunlight which was pure and warm.

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CHAPTER 170
COPPER WHISTLE

Klein turned towards the Captain's office and saw that the door was wide open. Dunn Smith was leaning back in his chair, sniffing at his pipe.

When Dunn swept his gray eyes at him, he changed his seating posture.

"You seem to be in good shape, nothing like someone who had just consumed a potion."

"This might be the advantage of fully digesting a potion before leveling up." Klein closed the door behind him and took a seat.

He and Dunn both knew about the "acting method," so their oath didn't keep them from talking about the "acting method" with each other. They could exchange their thoughts about it, but the two of them didn't bring it up with a tacit understanding. They fell silent at the same time after the exchange.

Klein thought and asked, "Has His Grace left?"

"Yes, as a high-ranking deacon, he has other matters to take care of." Dunn thought for a moment. "Oh, he took the pair of red eyeballs that remained after Old Neil died."

Klein was shocked and confused.

"Why?"

Dunn picked up his coffee and took a sip. He answered after a long silence, "We shouldn't lie to ourselves. A Rampager is in fact already a monster, and as I told you before, monsters leave behind things that are rich with Beyonder powers after they die. When these relics can't be controlled, they have to be sealed. Yes, that is one of the most common origins of Sealed Artifacts. According to the Nighthawks' internal rules, the items left behind by Rampagers need to be stored elsewhere, so that they won't trigger their partners."

"A logical rule." Klein nodded heavily.

Suddenly, he sharply noticed that the Captain had missed out something. So, he asked curiously, "What if the item left behind is controllable?"

Dunn looked at him, his gray eyes were deep like a quiet night.

He sighed and said, "You wouldn't want to know the answer."

Klein was taken aback before he suddenly realized a possibility.

Normal monsters left behind Beyonder ingredients which could be used to make potions.

But what of a Rampager who turned into a monster?

If they left behind controllable items, would those things be used as Beyonder ingredients?

Upon realizing that, Klein suddenly felt a strong sense of disgust. He couldn't help but turn his head to retch. Even his sight suddenly grew blurry.

This is such a terrifying theory… But it's an answer that's highly likely of being closer to the truth! In that instant, he had a deeper understanding of sayings like "To fight against the abyss, we have to endure the corruption of the abyss," and "We are guardians, but also a bunch of miserable wretches that are constantly fighting against threats and madness."

Would this be one of the reasons why the Church hides the "acting method"? So that they can recycle a certain number of their own members for spare parts? But this will make members of the upper echelons reject the Church… Klein's face clearly reflected his changing expressions.

Upon seeing his response, Dunn suddenly laughed. There was a twinkling light in his gray eyes.

"Think about it on the brighter side of things, you can think of it as our teammates watching over us in a different form. They will be with us forever."

After saying that, Dunn lowered his head, picked up his coffee, and brought it to his mouth.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, he lifted his head and said, "And you don't have to worry. As long as we can find sources of Beyonder ingredients, we wouldn't do what you were thinking about.

"Alright, according to the rules, you'll receive a day off since you just advanced. You can decide whether or not you want to go to your combat training this afternoon, but you have to inform Gawain either way."

Klein gently nodded. Taking a deep breath, he straightened his back and said, "Captain, I have finished my lessons on mysticism. I'd like to use my mornings to learn techniques such as tracking and monitoring."

He paused and added with a serious expression, "I'd like to fulfill my full duty as a Nighthawk soon."

Dunn gave him a piercing look and sighed.

"You're tougher than I imagined. As you wish."

"Yes, Captain!" Klein suddenly stood up and drew a crimson moon on his chest.

…

After leaving the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein didn't return home to rest, but instead, took the opportunity to take a trackless carriage to Azik's place.

Ding dong, ding dong.

As the doorbell rang clearly, Azik opened the door in a white shirt and black vest.

There was a gold watch chain hanging from his vest pocket.

"Don't you need to work?" Azik took a glance at the sky and realized that the sun had yet to climb to its peak.

"I actually have most of the day off due to some special circumstances," Klein explained vaguely.

Azik looked at him and appeared to notice something as he nodded and made way for Klein's entry.

At the hallway, Klein set his cane aside, took off his hat, and followed Azik to the living room.

The living room was comfortably furnished with a fireplace, rocking chair, couches, and a coffee table. Klein sat at his usual spot.

Azik sat down opposite Klein and pointed at the cigars on the coffee table.

"Do you want one?"

"No." Klein shook his head firmly.

Azik didn't attempt to persuade him as he struck a match and lit one of the cigars. At the same time, he asked casually, "Have you taken care of the

matter at Morse Town?"

"I have to thank you for that," Klein replied sincerely.

At the same time, he secretly lampooned, *Mr. Azik, before you lost your memories, you definitely must've left behind quite a sizable wealth for yourself. Otherwise, how could a teacher who isn't even an associate professor be able to enjoy cigars so frequently?*

As Azik was fiddling with his cigar, Klein brought up a matter.

"Mr. Azik, I have something to ask you."

"What is it?" Azik replied without lifting his head.

Klein paused and organized his words.

"One of my colleagues lost control and became a monster. I'd like to know if his spirit was contaminated?"

He wasn't certain if Mr. Azik knew the meaning of "losing control," so he prepared an explanation, just in case.

Azik stopped what he was doing and lifted his head to look at Klein. He nodded heavily and said, "No doubt. You have to be very careful in a situation like that. If he lost control due to the temptation of an evil god or devil, try to avoid contacting his spirit. It might very likely lead to life-threatening danger."

"I understand." Klein let out a breath of disappointment.

When he was at Old Neil's place, he was too emotional and had forgotten to contact Old Neil's spirit. Neither did Dunn Smith remind him at all. Hence, he missed the opportunity entirely.

Now that I think of it, Captain didn't forget but intentionally avoided bringing it up… Klein was silent in thought.

He didn't dwell on the topic and instead mentioned his previous encounter.

"Mr. Azik, I tried to divine the origins of Morse Town's paranormal incidents. I ended up seeing an upside-down pyramid that extended underground. My teammate told me that it's a symbol of Death. Only His descendants would receive such an honor."

Azik put down the match and took up the cigar cutter when he suddenly fell into a daze. He was motionless for quite a while.

He leaned back into his seat and wore an unusually gloomy expression.

After a while, he said in a deep voice, "This gives me a very familiar feeling, but I don't seem to be recalling anything."

"I'm very sorry." Klein sighed sincerely.

He had imagined that he could use the revelation obtained from his divination to further jolt Mr. Azik's memories.

Azik cut off the cigar cap, shook his head, and smiled bitterly.

"If it was something that could be recalled easily, I think I would've long found a way to escape my fate. Of course, I have to thank you for your kindness. Thank you for remembering about me this entire time."

He thought for a moment before adding, "Oh, and I'll be leaving Tingen in the near future."

"Why?" Klein asked in surprise.

Didn't we say that we were going to find the manipulator behind the scenes, the person who affected my fate, and stole your child's skull?

Azik held his cigar and sighed before explaining, "The target might've noticed my attention and investigation. He hasn't been taking any action recently, leaving me with no clues. Thus, I'm thinking of leaving Tingen for the time being and going to Backlund. On one hand, I can take the opportunity to search for traces that I left behind before I lost my memories. On the other hand, my absence might let the target lower his guard."

That's right. Mr. Azik's last memory loss was around Backlund University. It's a pity that you can't take my place, searching for the red chimney house… Klein nodded solemnly and said,

"I'll pay close attention to this. Once the target takes action and exposes himself, I'll inform you immediately.

"Hmm. Mr. Azik, how will I inform you of things in a timely manner?"

Klein had the idea that if Azik was Death's descendant, or if he was linked to Death in a certain way, his powers would have been something similar to the Corpse Collector Sequence. He definitely had a way to call something like Daly's messenger.

In other words, this could confirm if Azik was actually related to Death or a descendant of Death.

Azik took a puff of his cigar and thought for nearly twenty seconds. He took out an ornament from his left sleeve.

It was an intricate but old copper whistle. There were many unique patterns that filled it with a mysterious aura.

"This is something that I had with me when I woke up in Backlund. When you blow it, you'll summon a messenger that belongs to me." Azik held the copper whistle as he explained in detail.

*After so many years, this copper whistle can still be used? This should be a magical item, right? *Klein was surprised and delighted that he had

indirectly proved that Mr. Azik was related to Death.

Azik gave Klein a glance, then he put the copper whistle to his mouth and demonstrated.

His cheeks puffed up as he blew with all his might.

Nothing was heard, but Klein felt a sudden gloominess and coldness.

He quickly tapped his left molar and saw that there were blurry white bones being thrown up from the ground, one after another, forming a strange fountain.

After a few seconds, there was an illusory monster in the living room.

Its body was made of white bones, and there were dark flames glowing in its eye sockets. It was almost four meters tall, and it towered over Klein, who wasn't even 175cm tall.

As he watched its head nearly tear through the ceiling, Klein suddenly had a thought, *Mr. Azik, isn't your messenger a little… too exaggerated?*

Azik didn't share those thoughts at all. He smiled and said, "After you pass the letter to it, blow the whistle again to end the summoning. Then, it'll send the letter to me very quickly, in a secretive manner."

After that, Azik shook his wrist and threw the old copper whistle across the room.

Klein extended his right hand and accurately caught it. He found it cold but mild.

Thank you Clown potion… He breathed a sigh of relief. He wiped the whistle and blew it hard.

Silently, the huge messenger fell apart as blurry white bones sank underground.

…

The Tussock River ran through Backlund and harbors that dotted around the area.

Alger Wilson wore the long priest robes of the Church of the Lord of Storms as he walked down from the passenger ship slowly.

He saw people walking to and fro around the harbor with countless port workers sweating under the sun. It was a bustling yet noisy scene.

"It's been a while, Backlund," Alger muttered to himself.

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CHAPTER 171
PROMOTION AND PAY RAISE

After leaving Azik's house, Klein took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

As he opened the door to his house, he suddenly saw a figure sitting in his dining room.

Klein instinctively tightened his grip on the cane in his hand, but quickly realized what was going on. It wasn't a thief, but his maid, Bella.

Bella was focused on reading a spread-out newspaper on the table. She jumped in shock when she heard the door open, quickly standing up and stammering, "I-I was just done with the tasks for the morning. I was w-waiting for the water to boil so that I could eat some bread."

I'm still not really used to having a maid in the house… Klein mocked himself. He took off his hat and nodded.

"Reading is a good habit. To be able to persist in reading, despite the busy workload, is something that's encouraged by the Goddess."

He used the name of the Goddess just in case Bella took his compliment as sarcasm.

But in reality, only the God of Knowledge and Wisdom would place this much emphasis on reading… Of course, all of the Churches advocate education… Yes, since she's about 18 years old and believes in the Goddess, Bella's love for reading must be influenced by her parents. Parents like this would send their daughter to receive an education as long as they can

afford it. Even if they cannot afford public schools, there are always the free schools provided by the Church. At most, it would just delay her education… Thus, Bella isn't illiterate. She can understand words and read the newspaper… Klein thought as he walked into the living room after setting his cane down.

He had quite a good impression of Bella.

Even though she was a little clumsy and obviously not used to the kitchen, she had shown a willingness to learn.

Bella let her hands hang down and said, embarrassed, "I didn't have the opportunity to read many newspapers in the past. The landlord didn't let us use old newspapers to clean the walls… I stole a glance at it when I picked up the newspapers just now to clean the coffee table. I thought that-that it was rather interesting."

*What a pitiful lady. When I transmigrated, newspapers were the least interesting of things… *Klein thought as he lampooned. He smiled and took out the silver pocket watch from his pocket. After looking at the time, he said, "As long as you complete your tasks and do them well, you are free to do whatever you want with the rest of your time. You don't need to be too nervous. Of course, if I'm having a chat with Benson and Melissa, it's best that you stay in your room. I will allow you to use the lamp inside and take a few old newspapers with you."

"Oh, please knock at my door at one in the afternoon, then prepare a cup of Sibe black tea, two pieces of soft white bread, a piece of wheat toast, and a small plate of butter for me."

In order to celebrate his advancement to Sequence 8, Klein decided to spoil himself slightly. He was going to eat the white bread ahead of Benson who was planning on having it over the weekend.

*Well, I'll buy eight more pounds of bread soon. In the future, we shall make the change in our staple dish, from wheat bread to white bread! As a

Sequence 8 Beyonder, my weekly pay is definitely going to increase… To think that the Captain didn't mention this… He forgot again! *Klein froze for a moment and decided to clarify it tomorrow.

"Alright," Bella replied in surprise and joy.

Following that, she asked with a little uncertainty, "Mr. Klein, do you mean the Sibe black tea used to entertain guests?"

She called him by his first name as Moretti could be used to refer to anyone in the family.

"Yes, that shall be my usual tea in the future." Klein waved his hand and made his way towards the stairs.

He suddenly noticed that he was in a decent financial situation after becoming a Clown.

This was partly because there were no other large expenses for the time being. He only needed to spend two soli on transport while he was investigating the houses with red chimneys, and on the materials that he needed to purchase occasionally. Claims could be made for the latter most of the time anyway.

Also, there was a sum of 300 pounds in Klein's anonymous bank account. It was important to understand that one are 1 of land in the countryside only cost five to six and a half soli, which was another way of saying that Klein could afford 920 to 1200 ares of farmland, which was equivalent to 137 to 179 mou 2 back on Earth. Furthermore, this sum of money could allow Klein to buy a house on Daffodil Street on a contract for 15 years.

If I convert all that money into land, I'll get between 23 and 31 pounds a year in rent… That's not bad, but not necessary for the time being. I'll use that 300 pounds for emergencies… I'll have to find an opportunity to tell Benson and Melissa about my true weekly salary! Klein thought as he entered his room.

After locking the door to his room, Klein sat on the edge of his bed and started his Cogitation. He wanted to use this method to slowly control the powers seeping out of his potion. He was very careful and very cautious.

He had thought of the term "losing control" very lightly until he saw the Mandated Punisher who had lost control.

Of course, he didn't know that Mandated Punisher personally. He also didn't know what had happened to him. He subconsciously thought of him as an anomaly, a rare case.

It was just like how an average person would make comments about a murder they saw on the news before forgetting about it entirely.

But what happened to Old Neil shook Klein greatly. It made him realize very clearly that losing control was always a possibility, always around him. Loss of control might descend upon him in ways he had never thought about!

That sure was a bloody lesson… Klein ended his Cogitation and muttered to himself as he opened his eyes.

He had dreamed of that scene many times in the past few days, jolting awake in the process and finding himself drenched in cold sweat.

He wasn't only grieving Old Neil's death, but also worried about his future. If he didn't have Cogitation to help him sleep, he believed that there would be many sleepless nights in his future.

Other than digesting the potion, I also have to try my best to control my emotions and desires. I have to keep them within reasonable levels and not be consumed by them… Klein exhaled and laid down, quickly falling asleep.

On the day that Old Neil passed away, Dunn's actions and words had touched him greatly. It made him critically assess the responsibilities of a

Nighthawk for the first time. It made him want to take up his responsibilities and help his Captain and teammates.

Thus, he didn't intend to waste his afternoon. He was going to continue his combat lessons.

…

Three in the afternoon, on a crude training field.

The blond crew-cut Gawain creased his brows as he witnessed Klein slowly familiarize himself with the motions, going from the movements of a decent beginner to the movements of an apprentice knight who had been practicing for a good six months.

All this happened in the short span of forty minutes!

He called for Klein to stop and sized him up. He couldn't help but ask, "What happened?"

Klein had already come up with an excuse. He was prepared to attribute his performance to scientific research when Gawain added, "You don't need to answer if it's inconvenient for you to do so."

It looks like there was some communication between the police department and Gawain… It makes sense; he has to train Beyonders occasionally, so how could he not know? Klein heaved a sigh of relief. He smiled as he said, "Teacher, how long do you think I will need before I can take part in actual combat?"

Gawain crossed his arms and looked at Klein seriously. He replied with a raspy voice, "Two or three days, but that isn't enough!"

He explained, as if in thought, "Being able to take part in actual combat isn't the same as being good at fighting. The latter would take another two to three weeks.

"Furthermore, you need to gain mastery over weapons that you can bring with you, for example, a cane, whips, daggers, and bayonets!"

… *There's still so many to learn?* Klein was dumbfounded.

Gawain swept his experienced gaze at him.

"Remember, every drop of sweat you lose here might save your life in the future."

"Yes, Teacher!" Klein pumped himself up and answered.

…

On Sunday morning, Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door of the Captain's office.

Dunn Smith looked up as if he was expecting this.

"I forgot to inform you yesterday. Your position at the police department has risen from probationary inspector to inspector now that you have advanced to Sequence 8. I'll get them to issue the appropriate documents and epaulets to you as soon as possible.

"Your weekly salary will also increase from six pounds to ten pounds. The Church and the police department will each bear half of your salary. This salary is the level of an experienced Nighthawk; of course, I mean an experienced Nighthawk at Sequence 9."

… *Captain, are you following the wrong script?* Klein was taken aback as he listened to the Captain. His eyebrows relaxed as he smiled.

"That's more than I imagined."

He had imagined that his weekly salary would only increase to eight pounds.

Dunn lifted his cup of coffee and took a sip.

"The increase in salary for Nighthawks is firstly dependent on years of service, second on contribution, and third on the level of your job. The third criterion is often highly correlated with your contributions."

Right, without any contributions, even if one were to digest their potion, they would be unable to apply for the formula and materials… Klein nodded while in thought.

A weekly salary of 10 pounds, coupled with any bonuses would mean a yearly salary of about 540 pounds. Since he didn't need to pay any taxes, this salary was fairly high in the middle-income bracket, just lower than desirable occupations such as esteemed lawyers, famous architects, experienced surgeons, and government workers.

Even the vice president of the Loen Kingdom's treasury only makes 700 pounds a year before tax. That's at most 640 pounds after tax, probably lower… According to the newspapers, a decent house in Backlund and Hillston only costs about 2500 pounds. With Benson, Melissa, and my current expenditure, we could buy one in seven or eight years… To be able to afford a bungalow in the central area of the capital in just seven or eight years purely through my own efforts, this salary makes me happy indeed… Klein got up and bade farewell. He quickly walked to the basement and took his shift at Chanis Gate.

Before it was ten, he suddenly heard someone approaching Chanis Gate.

Soon after, Dunn appeared at the door.

"There's a case that requires your help."

"An incident involving Beyonders?" Klein instinctively asked.

"No, a parliamentary representative of this city, Mr. Maynard, was found dead in his house. The Tingen Police Department is under huge pressure

and wants us to use a mediumship ritual to help them pinpoint the murderer. Currently, you are the only person on the team who can do that," Dunn explained. Then he added, "The Holy Cathedral will send over a Mystery Pryer to our team next week. Actually, it should've been done a long time ago, but you happened to join and chose to be a Seer."

Footnotes:

Ch 171 Footnote 1

Chinese unit of land measurement that varies with location but is commonly 666.5 square meters.

Ch 171 Footnote 2

A metric historical unit of measurement, equal to 100 square meters.

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CHAPTER 172 "AUTOPSY"

"How long has the Member of Parliament been dead for?" Klein asked straightforwardly as he packed up his things.

If it was more than fifteen minutes, the information that he could obtain would decline considerably. If it was more than an hour, there would be very little left to find.

If it was more than a month, contact with the spirit of the dead would most likely fail.

"Regrettably, the initial autopsy report shows that Mr. Maynard died between nine and eleven last night." Dunn shook his head and said, "You only need to provide assistance and not consider if you can be of use."

"Alright." Klein took his coat and walked out of the duty room with his hat and cane in hand. Dunn Smith took his place at the Chanis Gate guardroom.

Theoretically, as a Beyonder, as long as one's spirituality was enhanced, things like Spirit Vision, divination, and ritualistic magic could be learned. Especially for Beyonders from the Sleepless Sequence who were known for their high spirituality.

But in actual fact, the differences between the various sequences was vastly obvious. Dunn Smith and Leonard Mitchell had learned Spirit Vision, but they could only see faint white or light blue in the auras of others. They were unable to precisely differentiate the status of different body parts. Of course, they could definitely see spiritual things with Spirit Vision, but doing so wasn't as effective as using their spiritual perception.

That also led to a problem in which Beyonders at the Sleepless, Midnight Poet, and Nightmare Sequences didn't enjoy activating their Spirit Vision.

Similarly, if they were willing to, they could also learn spirit pendulums, dowsing, dream divination, and so on. But their rate of success wasn't something worth noting.

It was the same situation with ritualistic magic as well.

When the two of them walked past one another, Dunn suddenly said, "I forgot to tell you that Inspector Tolle is in charge of the case. He's waiting for you at the reception hall in the security company. Remember to change into your new uniform and grab your new documents."

Klein wasn't surprised and replied with a smile, "New uniform, new documents? The Tingen Police Department sure is efficient."

He had just advanced to Sequence 8 the day before…

"It's because this case is very important, so…" Dunn spread his hands and took up Klein's previous spot.

Klein walked upstairs, but he wasn't in a hurry to go to the reception hall. He entered the Nighthawks' break room and entered the attached bathroom to relieve himself. There was only a toilet bowl, a water bottle, and a bucket in the duty room.

Then, he changed into his police uniform that revealed his promotion to two silver stars and put on his peak cap with the "two crossed swords and a crown."

After transferring his Flaring Sun Charm, Azik's copper whistle, his ritual ingredients, and other items, Klein smoothed out his uniform, took his cane, and exited the break room.

He passed through the partition and saw Inspector Tolle seated in the sofa area.

It had been a while since they last met. The tall police officer seemed to have gained some weight, and his stomach was even more outstanding. With his thick mustache and hair, he looked like a brown bear that had just escaped from a circus.

"I'm glad to work with you again." When Tolle saw that it was a Nighthawk that he knew, he let out a breath of relief. He stood up and extended his bear paw.

*No, palm… *Klein corrected himself and shook the other person's hand as a polite gesture.

"Me too."

Tolle stole a glance at Klein's two shimmering silver stars shoulder strap and said with envy, "We're at the same rank now, and it hasn't even been a month."

At first, Klein wanted to reply solemnly that "The danger that we encounter is ten times worse than yours," but he remembered his identity then: Sequence 8 Clown.

Maybe I can give it a try… Using his spirituality, he looked at the reflection of his facial expression. He lifted the corner of his lips and replied with a smile, "Maybe in another few months, you'll have to call me 'Sir.'"

"You sure are humorous." Tolle chuckled and pointed at the door. "Shall we head out?"

"Alright." Klein hadn't given up his cane. Now that he had become a Clown, the cane was truly a viable weapon.

After exiting the Blackthorn Security Company, Klein and Tolle walked down side by side, forming a great contrast due to the skinniness and fatness of the two.

"I feel like we could even make an audience at the circus laugh," Klein suddenly jested.

Tolle nodded in absolute agreement and said, "Yes, I feel our vast contrast brings a comedic effect. Do you know that some circuses are trying to use fat and skinny, tall and short clown combinations in their performances?"

No, actually I meant a beast tamer and a brown bear… Klein, of course, wouldn't make such a rude remark. He went along with it and replied, "It's a pity that there are no fixed circuses in Tingen."

"That's right, but we have operas, theaters, and music halls," Inspector Tolle replied wistfully.

They casually chatted until they got onto the police carriage. Then, Klein redirected the topic back to the case.

"Is it confirmed that Mr. Maynard was murdered?"

"We can't be certain, but his wife and two sons aren't willing to believe the possibility that he died due to a sudden illness. And there was really something wrong at the scene. When Maynard was found, he was naked on the guestroom's bed," Tolle said as he deliberated.

"He sleeps separately from his wife?" Klein leaned back against the carriage wall and mimicked the main character in various detective films.

Tolle shook his head and said, "No, his wife hasn't been in Tingen recently. She went to Backlund to attend a very important social ball. You might not know, but she's the leader of a new party. She's the daughter of someone from the House of Commons. She's still on her way back to Tingen via

steam locomotive. She merely used the telegram to express her opinion on this matter."

"Maynard is also a member of the new party. He's been a Tingen's Member of Parliament for more than ten years. He intended to run for mayor in next year's election."

"In other words, his death might be related to this?" Klein asked casually and immediately laughed. "I'm sorry, I'm only supposed to be helping with the autopsy. The rest of the matter is not within my area of concern, you don't have to answer."

Tolle didn't mind much but sighed.

"Autopsy… You're very cautious."

"As for your guesses, I would only say that there's a possibility. There was a gathering last night at Maynard's place. There were too many guests, and we temporarily can't find any main suspects. Plus, these guests have decent backgrounds, so we have to be very careful. We can't make any mistakes."

"I understand." Klein nodded faintly and asked about the details of the scene.

Maynard's house was a bungalow located in the Golden Indus borough. It was surrounded by gardens and fields, there was a stable, a fountain, and a broad pathway built from cement.

Klein put on his peak hat with its police badge and followed behind Inspector Tolle. They passed through the police streamer and entered the double-story house under the gaze of every policeman present.

In the living room, there were two male and four female probationary inspectors who were talking to people individually to gather statements.

Klein looked around and saw many gentlemen in tuxedos and a few ladies in glamorous dresses and checkered gauze hats.

"They're the guests who spent the night here," Tolle explained and led Klein up the stairs to the second floor directly.

Along the way, when the police constables who were searching through the rooms saw the two, they revealed a look of respect without stopping them. Perhaps it was the effect of the inspector epaulets.

"This is the guest room where Maynard's corpse was discovered." The brawny Tolle stopped by the crimson wooden door.

Klein thought and asked, "Which guest was assigned to this guest room?"

"Nobody. There are too many guest rooms in the house, so it wasn't used." Tolle put on his white gloves and turned the knob of the crimson wooden door.

He made the constable who was keeping watch leave temporarily. Then, he nodded at Klein and said, "Inspector Moretti, I'll leave the rest to you."

"May the Goddess bless us, and I hope that we find something." Klein put on his white gloves too and locked the door behind him.

He walked to the side of the bed and saw that the crimson bedsheets were abnormally messy. The corpse laying on it was covered with a white cloth.

At this point, Klein could be considered to be quite experienced. He pulled away the white cloth without fear and looked at Member of Parliament Maynard.

The man was in his forties. His blond hair was trimmed short, and his expression was a mixture of pain and happiness.

Klein took two steps back and took out the ingredients he needed. He quickly finished the setup for the mediumship ritual.

As the faint calming fragrance swirled around him, he recited the divination statement that he thought of long ago, "The cause of Maynard's death."

"The cause of Maynard's death."

…

As he recited the statement, Klein retreated to a nearby high back chair and sat down slowly.

His eyes darkened, then he leaned back and quickly fell into a deep sleep.

In the illusory and blurry world, he suddenly saw the gentleman from earlier.

With his opened blue eyes, Maynard was laying prostrate above a woman with an outstanding body and fair skin. He was thrusting hard against her body.

He first displayed an expression of extreme satisfaction and happiness. Then, he suddenly clutched his chest with his right hand. His expression then grew contorted.

Pa!

As Maynard fell, the image quickly shattered. Klein opened his eyes and woke up from his dream.

I can't believe I can actually watch porn in such a manner… So, Maynard had an affair and died of exhaustion? Klein chuckled and massaged his temples.

He took out a pen and paper before doing another ritual. He drew a portrait of the lady he had seen in his dream with the aid of the ritual. Of course, everything below her neck was omitted.

It was a woman whose age was hard to tell. She had the mature vibe of a woman in her thirties, but there was a remnant of innocence to her. Her eyes were crystal clear, and she had a delicate look.

Klein looked at his work, then put away his ritual ingredients, and dispelled the spirituality wall.

He leaned sideways to grab his silver-edged cane.

Suddenly, he heard the reverberating sound of someone clearing their throat. He immediately got goosebumps!

Klein looked towards the bed and saw Maynard gripping the crimson bedsheets so tightly that the tendons on the backs of his hands were protruding out.

With a swoosh, the Member of Parliament who died between nine and eleven the previous night suddenly sat up. Saliva drooled from the corners of his lips as he opened his vacant eyes wide.

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CHAPTER 173
ZOMBIEFICATION

Before Klein could come up with any new ideas, he saw the rigid Maynard lift both his hands up. Its body lunged forward to his left amidst the sound of hurtling wind!

In the past, his dulled reactions under such sudden, unexpected situations would've made it hard for him to avoid this. Even if he had noticed the attack ahead of time, he would have had to roll away to avoid the fast-moving corpse.

But now, Klein could nearly react on instinct. He stomped down with his bright, buttonless leather boots and jumped diagonally onto the high-back chair.

As it had only been a day since he advanced, he was still getting used to his power, agility, and speed. He had accidentally leaped too high into the air and landed on the top of the chair's high-back!

It was a narrow edge. Klein's heart tightened as he quickly controlled his body and adjusted his center of gravity.

He wavered for a moment and surprisingly managed to stabilize himself, like a black cat flaunting its balance and poise.

As he was wavering, he flailed his left arm, swinging his cane into the zombie's ribs as it pounced forward. The strike caused it to lose its balance as it staggered and fell onto the carpet.

Klein was standing on top of the chair as he felt for his revolver by raising his right arm. He attempted to pull it out from the holster so that he could deliver a silver demon hunting bullet at the zombie in front of him.

But in that instant, he suddenly wondered about the aftermath.

If he were to blow a hole in Member of Parliament Maynard's corpse, how was he going to explain the cause of death to the deceased's family or Members of Parliament who were focusing on the matter?

All I did was double-tap his corpse?

As he was thinking, Klein reached into the pocket of his police uniform and felt for a triangular plate.

The Requiem Charm… He quickly made a decision. He took out the silver amulet without hesitation and let out a low shout in Hermes, "Crimson!"

As the incantation reverberated within the room, the charm started to release a peaceful aura. Klein quickly infused his spirituality into the amulet and tossed it to Zombie Maynard who was struggling to get up.

A cold blue fire appeared, enveloping the triangular plate. A serene and gentle black aura spread forth rapidly, eliminating the anxiety and worry of the soul.

Zombie Maynard stopped there, his eyes staring blankly at the ground. His saliva dripped onto the carpet.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief and planned to take out the materials and set up a ritual to purify the desecrated being, but suddenly, Maynard once again let out a groan, his blank eyes focused on the left pocket of Klein's police uniform again.

Shit… Klein leaped from the top of the chair to the ledge of the oriel window.

At the same time, he heard the sound of the chair breaking.

Klein had no choice but to take out a rectangular silver plate.

The Slumber Charm!

It wasn't only living things that could be put into a deep sleep. The dead were in a state of eternal sleep and would only be woken up under unusual circumstances!

In certain books on mysticism, there was even such a description regarding zombies: They slumber by the day and wake up in the night.

"Crimson!"

Klein once again recited the incantation in Hermes. He intended to disregard the consequences and shoot the corpse with his revolver if that failed again.

The problems that came later wouldn't matter if he was dead!

As he felt the silver rectangular plate in his palm turn cold, Klein injected his spirituality into it and tossed the charm out.

A dark red flame illuminated his eyes as the sound of a light explosion reverberated around the room.

A gentle power spread forth, bringing with it a fatigue that affected every living being. Zombie Maynard had just propped himself up using the chair when he wavered. His eyes closed, and he fell on his back with a plop.

With what had just happened, Klein didn't dare to relax. He immediately took out the Amantha extract distilled from Night vanilla, Slumber flower, and Chamomile, as well as the bark of the Drago tree, and the Full Moon Essence Oil made from Moon flowers. He quickly set up a sacrificial altar.

Right on the heels of that, he sealed the surrounding area with a spirituality wall with the aid of Holy Night Powder, encompassing the altar and the sleeping Zombie Maynard.

After silently reciting the incantation and lighting three corresponding candles, he dripped a few drops of essential oil extract and scattered various powders onto the flames. Klein then took a step back and cautiously looked at Zombie Maynard. He then recited in Hermes,

"Oh Evernight Goddess, nobler than the stars and more eternal than eternity.

"I pray for your loving grace.

"I pray that you look over your loyal guardian,

"I pray for the power of the crimson.

"I pray for the power of sleep and silence,

"I pray that you purify the unclean being around me, the gentleman once called John Maynard."

…

"Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!

"Slumber flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please bestow your powers to my incantation!"

…

It was as if a midnight breeze blew within the wall of spirituality. A thin veil of black steam started to billow from Zombie Maynard.

When everything settled, Klein used his Spirit Vision and divination to repeatedly confirm that the zombie wouldn't "awaken" once more.

After seeing the results, his worries eased. He ended the ritual and dispelled the wall of spirituality.

"Why would he suddenly come back to life?" Klein stood in front of Maynard, who was on the carpet. He knitted his brows as he looked down at the corpse.

To a Beyonder with high spiritual sensitivity, there were obvious signs to note if a corpse would come back to life or not, much less Klein, who was a Seer. He often had a premonition of similar matters, but what had happened just now completely took him by surprise.

Unless-unless there is a more mysterious influence at play… Just like what happened with the suited clown. Klein recalled the scene in his head and faintly sensed the problem:

Zombie Maynard had been trying to attack the left pocket of his police uniform!

Left pocket? Klein transferred his black cane to his right palm, then reached for the pocket with his left hand. He took out the ancient copper whistle that was inside.

It was a copper whistle carved with many mysterious patterns. It was the copper whistle used to summon Azik's messenger.

This copper whistle zombified Maynard? That's quite plausible. Even if Mr. Azik isn't a descendant of Death, he definitely has a certain connection with Death. It's logical that the objects that he carries with him would produce such an effect… Klein nodded in thought. He took out a copper penny and did a quick divination about his conclusion.

As he was at the scene of the incident, holding the relevant objects, and had ample information, he quickly got a result. He saw the copper penny fall into his palm, portrait facing up.

This means yes. To think that Mr. Azik didn't remind me to be cautious that these things could happen… Well… He's an amnesiac, so it's not uncommon to forget this. Besides, the copper whistle might not have had negative effects when it was on him. There's a high possibility that it was suppressed. I shouldn't take this copper whistle with me when I'm at cemeteries or ancient castles, places that are prone to hauntings. Otherwise, I'll just be finding trouble for myself and crazily court death… Klein silently made a mental note. He then carried the naked Maynard back onto the bed without much effort.

Looking at the obvious mark on the corpse left behind by the stroke of the cane, Klein sighed. He covered the corpse with the piece of white cloth and pretended not to notice.

I'll leave this problem to the police department to vex over it! Oh, and the two charms I used just now can be considered mission-related expenses, so I can get compensated… He thought as he packed up. He then took the portrait and unlocked the door.

The door opened with a creak and Klein saw Inspector Tolle, who had been guarding outside, not allowing anyone to come near.

"What happened just now?" Tolle asked in doubt and worry.

He could faintly hear the action going on in the room.

Klein smiled and deliberately said with a little exaggeration,

"Member of Parliament Maynard came back to life and tried to give me a passionate hug."

"Don't joke like that…" Tolle looked into the room in exasperation.

"Why so serious?" Klein said, throwing up his hands. "Due to an unconfirmed reason, Member of Parliament Maynard became a zombie. Well—the kind of things that would happen in ghost stories. Fortunately, I hadn't left yet, so I used ritualistic magic to purify the desecration, allowing him to return to his eternal slumber."

"Is this related to his cause of death?" Tolle asked, his expression stern.

"I cannot give you an answer to that. I don't even know what the problem is. You should know that in our field, unexplainable things are a common occurrence," Klein said. He then looked at the portrait in his hand, "When I was doing the mediumship ritual, I saw the scene of Maynard's death. He was engaging in some activities that should only be done between a husband and wife with this woman. And at the climax of his joy, he clutched his chest where the heart is."

"You mean that… that is the cause of his death?" Tolle gave him a "nudge nudge" and "wink wink" look.

"In theory, yes, but you should wait for the autopsy." Klein handed the portrait over to Inspector Tolle.

Tolle had only glanced at it when he exclaimed, "Madam Sharon!"

Klein looked at him, lost.

"Is she very famous?"

*Yea, judging from her looks and figure, she should be famous… *He lampooned in his heart.

Tolle looked around and introduced her in a somewhat excited manner, "Madam Sharon is the prettiest widow in Tingen City. She's the most sought-after lady in social settings. She was the second wife of Baron Khoy, but unfortunately became widowed.

"She is welcomed by many amongst the nouveau riche merchants and aristocrats, someone who can be invited to banquets by both the Conservative Party and the New Party."

"It's rumored that she and her stepson, the current Baron Khoy, are on 'friendly' terms with many nobles and senior civil servants in Backlund. She's a powerful lady. To think that she and Member of Parliament Maynard had such a relationship… Hehe…"

Simply put, she's an exceptional socialite… Klein secretly concluded. He turned around and pointed into the room.

"The next part is not included in my job description. How you interrogate Madam Sharon is none of my business."

"Also, I hit Member of Parliament Maynard with a cane before the purification. You'll have to deal with it and think of an explanation."

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CHAPTER 174
MADAM SHARON

"What?" The bearlike Tolle jumped in shock and looked at Klein before looking into the room. With agility that wasn't suited to his body, he dashed in.

He pulled back the white cloth that covered the corpse and after examining the body carefully, he heaved a breath of relief.

"It's better than I imagined. It's not that serious a problem."

Maybe I should've drawn my revolver and shot Maynard five times with demon hunting bullets. Let's see if you find that serious or not… Klein lampooned inwardly and pointed outside the door.

"That's all that you need me for, right?"

"No!" Tolle shouted. "Wait a moment."

Klein asked, puzzled, "Why?"

Tolle explained seriously, "We have to prevent any accidents from happening. After we talk to Madam Sharon and get her testimony, I'll send you back to Zouteland Street."

If Maynard can resurrect after being dead for ten hours, what else couldn't happen? What would I do if you leave? Tolle added in his head.

"Alright." Klein massaged his temple and said, "Find a quiet room for me to rest in then."

He wasn't feeling his best in every aspect as he had just advanced a day ago. Having just performed multiple ritual ceremonies, used two charms, and suffered a nontrivial scare, he needed to enter Cogitation to eliminate any problems.

Klein was now extremely cautious about losing control.

Tolle covered the dead body with the white cloth again. He obviously relaxed and replied, "No problem."

He brought Klein to a guest room that was closer to the sunlit side of the house. He pointed and said, "Inspector Moretti, don't worry. No one will disturb you. I'll be paying Madam Sharon a visit first."

Klein nodded slightly and watched him walk away. Then, he closed the door and drew the curtains.

In the dim and silent bedroom, he slowly walked over to the rocking chair and sat down comfortably. He allowed his body to rock back and forth rhythmically.

There were countless spherical phantasmal lights overlapping in his mind. The buzzing sounds in Klein's ears and the throbbing ache in his head slowly vanished, bit by bit.

When his situation stabilized, he opened his eyes and looked into the darkness. He outlined a bed, cupboard, and other furniture. Then, he calmly thought about his earlier attempts.

There isn't much feedback from a few exaggerated jokes…

Maybe I have yet to control the powers of the Clown potion, as there are still remnant negative effects… Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that such "acting" has little effect.

Personally, I'm not quite willing to play the role of a clown. But since I picked the Sequence pathway, I can only bite the bullet and continue…

Actually, everyone has to act like a clown at one point or another in their lives. I don't have to be so uncomfortable with the idea.

I have to quickly understand a Clown's core elements…

As various thoughts churned in his mind, Klein suddenly took out a brass halfpence.

Mostly out of habit, he divined if Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences.

Maybe it's an occupational hazard… Klein shook his head and laughed. His eyes grew dark as he recited repeatedly, "John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences."

…

Ding!

He flipped the coin as he slouched into the rocking chair. He watched its brass luster twinkle as it rotated in the air.

Pak! The coin fell right into Klein's open palm, revealing the number 1⁄2 facing up.

A negative answer. In other words, there weren't any supernatural influences involved in John Maynard's death. *I guess that man died of orgasmic pleasure. The deceased shouldn't be laughed at, so I won't be using an insipid Chinese phrase to mock him…* Klein put away his coin and allowed his thoughts to wander before he nearly fell asleep.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Under the slow and rhythmic knocking, Klein tidied his clothing, put on his policeman's peak cap, and walked to the door.

Just as his right palm touched the knob, a scene appeared in his mind.

The bearlike Inspector Tolle was standing outside the door and pulling his collar. His expression looked disturbed and helpless.

Klein turned the knob and opened the door leisurely.

Inspector Tolle appeared before him as he pulled at his collar.

"Sorry for making you wait so long.

"We've already found Madam Sharon and obtained her statement. You can return to Zouteland Street.

"I'm really sorry for taking up your precious time."

Klein didn't ask the reason for his current emotions but he smiled and said, "Madam Sharon admitted that she was with Maynard last night?"

"Yes. She said that under the influence of alcohol, she and Maynard didn't manage to control themselves. When she found out that he died of a heart attack, she was very afraid so she fled the room after she tidied herself up. She then hid in her own guest room. We don't have enough reason to raise charges against her right now, so we had to let her go while restricting some of her freedom. We'll have to wait for the autopsy," Inspector Tolle explained in detail.

Klein leaned his head sideways and smiled.

"Who are you explaining this to?"

Tolle shook his head and forced a bitter smile. "Oh yeah, I don't have to explain it to you. I'm just frustrated by Madam Maynard, and I started

blabbering without realizing it."

"Maynard's wife is back?" Klein asked in response.

"Yes, unfortunately. There was something abnormal about the steam locomotive. It wasn't late." Tolle gave an affirmative answer in a joking manner.

Klein didn't ask further but checked if he had all his personal belongings, before following Inspector Tolle down the stairs.

"Why aren't you arresting her?

"She's a murderer! I want to sue her, and I want to sue all of you for negligence of duty!

"I'll hire the best lawyer to sue you!"

…

Harsh remarks entered Klein's ears, and he looked over subconsciously. He saw a voluptuous and fair middle-aged lady staring angrily across her. Despite having two young men holding her arms, she continued yelling at them.

A very trendy regal gown in Backlund this year… Having frequently read the magazine, Ladies Aesthetic, the first thought on Klein's mind was something unrelated to the situation. He then saw a few gentlemen protecting a lady behind them.

The lady was in a long black dress with fair smooth skin, waterfall-like brown hair, and brown eyes. She looked as pitiful as a fawn in the woods. It made people want to protect her involuntarily.

Madam Sharon… Klein suddenly thought of the "porno" she had starred in. He quickly lifted his right hand, covered his mouth, and coughed twice.

Out of habit, he tapped his left molars twice and observed the people present with Spirit Vision.

There's some sort of problem with Mrs. Maynard's body. The colors of her aura are thinner. From the colors of her emotions, she's definitely feeling anger and hatred, which is consistent with her outward appearance…

Huh? The color of Madam Sharon's emotions are shaded in blue, which represents rational thinking and calmness… This is totally contrary to her appearance of panic and nervousness. As expected, a socialite ain't no innocent bunny… Her body is very healthy.

After examining her, Klein was about to retract his gaze when he suddenly saw Madam Sharon lift her head and steal a glance in his direction. Then, she lowered her head again and put on a trembling trepid look.

If I couldn't see your emotion colors directly, I might've been fooled by your act… You should consider working as an actress… Klein lampooned. He didn't stay any longer and left Maynard's house with Inspector Tolle. They took the carriage arranged by the police station and returned to Zouteland Street.

After taking over the shift from the Captain, he continued to stay on duty at Chanis Gate. He took the opportunity to write a claims application.

After an uneventful night, Klein returned upstairs and received the breakfast that he had requested Rozanne to buy for him.

"I love this pastry!" he complimented.

He had already passed her the money for breakfast ahead of time.

"Really? I can try it tomorrow then!" Rozanne replied happily.

The corner of Klein's lip twitched as he focused on his battle with the milk and pastry.

At twenty-five minutes past eight, he yawned and fought back the urge to fall asleep, he arrived at the nearby Shooting Club.

He had made an appointment with the asylum doctor, Daxter Guderian, a few days back.

…

Bang! Bang! Bang!

In the small shooting range, Klein and Daxter aimed at their own targets and finished their cylinder of bullets.

Clink! Clank! Daxter flipped and released the empty shells and examined Klein in interest.

"You're much more confident than before."

Of course, I advanced to Sequence 8. I now possess actual combat ability… Klein reflected on his own facial expression and body movements in his head and deliberately acted arrogantly.

"Because I only used about a month's time to master the power of my potion completely."

Daxter pouted slightly and said, "Although that is something to be proud of, there's no need to say it all the time."

Hey, as a Spectator, you didn't see through my performance… From the looks of it, a Clown has the power to suppress a Spectator's ability. Klein smiled at his discovery and asked, "How's Hood Eugen recently?"

"… He's gone insane for real." Daxter paused and continued, "I probed him with various methods. He really has gone insane. I'm considering whether to begin medicating him, to see if I can treat him."

As a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist, he actually pretended to be a mental patient… Even though he was giving treatments to other patients, it doesn't align with the core element of the potion's name. That was an incorrect way of using the "acting method." It's no wonder that he went insane… Klein thought and said, "Before he went insane, did you find out who got in contact with him?"

"Besides the doctors, patients, nurses, and odd-job workers in the asylum, there were no outsiders that had contact with him," Daxter confidently replied.

Klein briefly acknowledged that as he said, "How about even earlier? Is there anyone that visited him, or did he leave the asylum regularly for a period of time?"

In order to follow through with his initial promise, Klein never asked anything about Hood Eugen in his first few meetings.

Daxter fell into deep thought. It took him some time before he said, "Besides the members of the Psychology Alchemists, there weren't any more than five people that visited him. One of them came thrice. His name was El."

Without Klein asking, he continued, "But I heard from Hood Eugen that El was a pseudonym.

"His real name was Lanevus."

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CHAPTER 175
DEDUCTION

Lanevus? That criminal who cheated both money and sex? To think that he had a connection to Hood Eugen from the Psychology Alchemists… Klein froze for a moment when he heard the name. He immediately thought about the implications the name "Lanevus" had.

He's the cheat that escaped with more than 10,000 pounds!

Just a providing a clue would earn me 10 pounds. And if I help in capturing this moving treasury, I'll earn 100 pounds!

He's a scum that took advantage of the bodies and feelings of innocent women!

*To think that he knows Hood Eugen and went to visit him three times at the mental asylum. Does this mean that he's connected to the Beyonder circle, or that he's a Beyonder himself? *Klein suddenly recalled the name of a potion: the Marauder pathway Sequence 8—Swindler!

These Beyonders took pleasure in swindling others!

It's very possible! Klein nodded in thought. He controlled his facial expression and body language, feigning nonchalance as he asked, "Then, when was Mr. Lanevus's last visit to Hood Eugen?"

"Early July. I would have to check the registration records of the mental asylum to give you a specific date," Daxter Guderian replied after a few seconds of thought.

Lanevus's scam hadn't been exposed back in early July and he hadn't left Tingen.… Klein then asked, "Does Hood Eugen mention this person usually?"

"No. You should understand that a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist would never reveal something by accident. Every word they say has been deliberated over thoroughly. It would be impossible to learn their secrets unless they have some other hidden motives. I was only able to get the Telepathist formula after Hood Eugen went mad. Oh right, have you determined the authenticity of the formula?" Daxter expertly hid his feelings of pride toward his pathway's potion.

Klein laughed and replied, "It's authentic. When you need to advance, you can use that to concoct your potion without worry. We can help if the Psychology Alchemists are unable to provide you with the ingredients. Also, how have you been lately?"

"Not too bad. Other than being a little worried about Hood Eugen's condition, I feel rather relaxed. I no longer have symptoms of a split personality. You've helped me greatly in this regard," Daxter Guderian said, full of emotion.

Klein wore a humble expression.

"It's only right."

"Let's return to the topic at hand. Since you said that a Psychiatrist would deliberate over their every word before uttering it and wouldn't easily reveal their secrets, why did Hood Eugen tell you that El is Lanevus? Was he hinting at something, or was trying to warn you of anything?"

Daxter froze for a moment, then creased his brows.

"This is really weird, to think that I didn't notice this… Other than that, Hood Eugen didn't mention anything else. Could his motive be for me to

tell the upper echelons of the association about the name Lanevus should he meet with any problems?

"The association's reaction seemed strange, too. After I informed them about Hood Eugen's insanity, they did send a liaison. But after I described every detail, including Lanevus's name, there were no more replies from the upper echelons. It was like being a stone cast in the ocean. Could this mean that they've figured something out?"

"A reasonable deduction." Klein took out his demon hunting bullets and stuffed them into his revolver, then took aim at the target.

"If we follow this deduction, Hood Eugen might've long anticipated that he would become insane or die… And this has an untenable connection with Lanevus? But since he already anticipated it, why didn't he ask for help from the upper echelons?" Daxter gazed blankly ahead. He thought hard as he said, "Unfortunately, he's insane now. There's no way to effectively communicate with him now."

"Perhaps some kind of temptation made him choose to take the risk." Klein made a guess.

At the same time, he felt that it was regrettable that Hood Eugen had really become a mental patient. This compromised much of the information that he might have otherwise gotten.

Sigh. Even a dead person is better than a lunatic. I can use mediumship rituals to make the dead talk, but what can I do with a lunatic? Oh right, Madam Daly once tried to use mediumship rituals to call upon my lost memories. The theory behind the mediumship rituals seems to have been derived from the Psychology Alchemists… This means that I can also use the mediumship rituals on the living and create a scenario where I interact with his spirit directly using my spirit… I wonder if Hood Eugen would still be insane under those conditions.

Unfortunately, I'm not advanced enough in this field, so I don't think I would be able to do it… I'll call upon the messenger and ask Madam Daly about it first. I'll see if she can provide me with any techniques. If she thinks that only she can accomplish it, then I'll tell the Captain and get him to send a telegraph to Backlund to request for assistance…

I'm definitely not taking this troublesome course of action just because I want to learn the technique and attempt the ritual to summon the messenger…

Many thoughts ran through Klein's mind before he gradually narrowed it down to a single line of thought that could solve the problem.

Daxter Guderian approved of his guess.

"Greed always makes one foolish. Even when a person knows that there's only the abyss in front of him, he'll still attempt to walk to the edge and take a peek."

This is called crazily testing the limits of fate… Klein lampooned.

"Try your best to treat Hood Eugen after returning to the mental asylum. Try to keep him sober for a period of time and get some clues out of him."

"Also, don't hide your worries and anxiety. Establish more connections with the Psychology Alchemists and put pressure on them to solve Hood Eugen's problem. That's the most normal and reasonable reaction."

Daxter nodded seriously.

"I'll try my best."

Klein didn't say anymore and, after some deliberation, he asked, "Has there been any abnormalities with Hood Eugen's body recently? For example, thin scales growing on some parts of his body?"

"Near-insanity," "true insanity," and "losing control" were all descriptions of varying levels for a Beyonder when something was wrong with them. The least severe of the conditions were when their attitude changed as if they had become a new person, but were still capable of rational thoughts and actions. That was "near-insanity." "Insanity" was more severe in that the person would lose all logic, becoming a maniac and was difficult to communicate with. Those that couldn't be saved were those whose body and mind had become monsters, completely "losing control."

Sometimes, if the problem wasn't dealt with promptly, insanity would lead to losing control.

Before this, to avoid exposing the informant within the Psychology Alchemists, Dunn instructed the Nighthawks not to immediately deal with Hood Eugen. Instead, they switched to surveillance to ensure that Hood Eugen didn't lose control. But if there were signs of him losing control, they would have to deal with him immediately.

Daxter shook his head and let out a bitter laugh.

"No, you can ease your concern. I'm also very afraid that Hood Eugen will lose control, so I'm paying very close attention to detail. After all, I'm at the mental asylum six times a week."

After exchanging a few more words, they left the shooting range ten minutes apart.

Klein fought back his intense desire to sleep and took a public carriage back to Daffodil Street.

He opened the door and saw his sister sitting on the sofa. She was neither reading nor was she fiddling with machinery parts. She was just staring blankly ahead as if she had lost her soul.

Tapping his molars gently, Klein activated his Spirit Vision and asked, puzzled, "Melissa, did something happen?"

She looks healthy based on the colors of her aura, not malnourished like she was before…

Melissa retracted her gaze and pursed her lips, then looked at the kitchen which was producing some noise.

"Bella has been recommending the way that her family prepares breakfast back at home, she said that it's very delicious. I agreed to let her try it out this morning."

"What method is that?" Klein had an ominous feeling.

"Cooking all of the leftovers in a pot, then adding water and bread…" Melissa repeated softly.

T-this is the standard recipe for food of unknown origins… Klein pinched his forehead.

"And so?"

"We shouldn't waste food…" Melissa bit her lips and nodded.

Sis, I feel like you are questioning life… Klein cleared his throat and suppressed his desire to laugh. He then asked, "Where's Benson?"

"In the bathroom." Melissa broke free of her daze, as her eyes regained their luster.

At that moment, he heard the sounds of flushing from the bathroom. Benson came out with a newspaper in hand.

"My dear Klein, shall we get you a portion of breakfast?"

"No, I've already eaten." Klein shook his head resolutely, feeling lucky that he arranged to meet Daxter in the morning. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gotten Rozanne to buy breakfast for him.

"How regrettable. Otherwise, you would change your views on my culinary skills and be filled with confidence about it." Benson let out a self-deprecating laugh.

At this moment, Melissa noticed something. She turned to look at Klein and said, "You're back rather late today."

*Sis, be more innocent and lively. Don't worry about me all the time… The state you were in just now was great! *Klein immediately smiled.

"I have good news."

"You passed the examination of the police department and can obtain an increased salary?" Melissa asked without thinking.

Benson also smiled and nodded.

"…" Klein grabbed his hat and stood at the edge of the living room. He said in amusement, "How am supposed to surprise you guys like that?"

After that, he added with a dry cough, "Yes, my salary has increased severalfold."

He hid his recent increment of four additional pounds a week. He intended to save up a small piggy bank for himself. After all, he couldn't just rely on the money in the unmarked account. Furthermore, mentioning that his salary had increased severalfold was enough to scare his siblings.

"Six pounds?" Melissa exclaimed in shock, finding it bizarre.

"I really need to change my job." Benson stroked his hairline.

With the information Klein provided him, he had been putting a lot of effort into his studies.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, Melissa said with a delighted expression, "In that case, after deducting our normal expenses, you'll be able to save up enough money in two or three years to meet the standards of a marriageable gentleman. Well, it was Elizabeth who told me about the standards."

"…" Klein said at a loss, amused, "That's something to be considered far into the future. Shouldn't we celebrate? I hereby announce that from today on, our staple food shall become white bread. After my workload decreases, we shall go try out delicacies from different restaurants."

Melissa glanced at him, and, as though she did not hear what Klein had said, she said, "Benson and I are attending Mass at the Saint Selena Cathedral, do you want to come?"

I am praising the Goddess everyday… Klein laughed.

"I need to catch up on sleep."

He slept until half past twelve in the afternoon. After he had lunch with Benson and Melissa, he continued on with his mission of searching all the houses with red chimneys.

When it was late at night, he sealed his room with spirituality and prepared to try the ritual for summoning Spirit Guide Daly's messenger.

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CHAPTER 176
LETTER

For Klein, setting up a simple ritual was as easy as breathing. Very soon, he was done preparing the ingredients, and he lit up the candle that represented himself.

Looking at the flickering candlelight on the desk, Klein had an amusing thought for some baffling reason.

Would this be considered holding a candlelight vigil in memory of myself?

*F**k, what the hell am I thinking!?*

…

He reined back his thoughts and picked up the Black Rotten Flower powder that belonged to the domain of Death and sprinkled it onto the candle. In return, he caught a whiff of a smell that was akin to formaldehyde from his previous life.

Immediately after that, he dripped Full Moon Essence Oil, a favored item of the Evernight.

Amidst a sizzling crackle, his surroundings suddenly became quiet, and there was a shapeless, magical surge.

Klein took a step back and softly recited in ancient Hermes, "I!"

Then, he changed into Hermes, "I summon in my name."

"The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the higher-dimensional creature that a human orders, the messenger that belongs to Daly Simone."

Whoosh!

The wind wailed and the dim candlelight was tainted with a blue luster.

Under its illumination, the wall behind the desk produced translucent ripples, and a creepy face surfaced. Other than its mouth, it had no eyebrows, eyes, or nose.

Its thick lips parted, and a long red tongue was extended. There were sharp, irregular teeth that lined its mouth. In addition, the tip of the tongue had five delicate fingers. They were constantly extending and retracting, as though they were waiting for a delivery.

This is Daly's messenger? Compared to Mr. Azik's, it's just like a child. No, I can't accurately determine their differences. Yes, one is an adult Giant, and the other is a human baby… I wonder if it's due to the magical item, or if it signifies Mr. Azik's strength? I have to reevaluate my understanding of him. Perhaps, he's a High-Sequence Beyonder…

Crap, I forgot. In the letter, I should've asked Madam Daly for the names of the Sequence 4 and Sequence 3 Corpse Collector pathway. Mr. Azik most likely belongs to that pathway. Of course, he might've not advanced via potions. Yes, perhaps it's a gene that's passed down from his ancestors… I'll ask next time, the messenger is waiting…

Klein looked at it seriously for a while and passed the neatly folded paper into the messenger's "hand." Then, he watched as the hand gripped it tightly.

Whoosh!

The messenger retracted its tongue and swallowed the letter. The translucent, creepy, and wriggling face shrank back into the wall and

disappeared.

*I've got to say, this magic is quite cool. Rather convenient too, but it can't be spread… *Klein looked at the candlelight that had returned to normal. He shook his head and ended the ritual.

…

Monday morning. Backlund, Empress Borough.

In a hidden corner of the municipal garden built by Duke Negan, Xio Derecha with her unkempt blond hair and Fors Wall with her languid bearing were gawking at the liaison before them in a daze. They were momentarily at a loss at which language to use for a greeting.

The petite Xio, who was slightly over one and a half meters tall, looked at the golden retriever that had extended its tongue and was wagging its tail. She smoothed out her trainee knight attire and weighed her words before she said, "Are you Miss Audrey's messenger?

"Oh my Goddess, why am I asking a dog so seriously…"

Fors was holding a thin cigarette with her fingers as she chuckled.

"Maybe it's a magical creature?"

"I've never seen a magical creature that looks so much like a dog…" Xio replied in all seriousness.

Susie sat down and closed her mouth. She then pointed at her belly with her paw.

There was a leather pouch tied around the dog's body amidst her long golden fur.

Xio looked to her left and right, making sure that there was no one watching before she quickly moved closer. She bent down and removed the pouch.

Fors watched curiously when her expression suddenly turned weird.

"It's made of crocodile skin, and it looks like the work of the fashion designer, Mr. Sades… She's actually using such a pouch for the transaction…"

"… In other words, it's very expensive?" Xio raised the leather pouch.

Fors pursed her lips tightly and nodded seriously.

Xio instantly lowered her speed in an exaggerated manner. She carefully opened the zipper and took out the letter inside, as though she was carrying an antique vase in her hands.

After she read it, she passed the letter to Fors.

Fors burned it with her cigarette after reading it carefully. She watched as it turned into ashes and scattered onto the soil.

"There's no extra information provided." Xio pouted subconsciously. She took out a neatly folded paper from the pocket of her trainee knight attire.

She looked at Susie in an imposing manner and exhorted subconsciously, "This is the investigation report for the past few days. You must pass this on to Miss Audrey Hall directly."

Susie quivered and sat up straight, her tail was wagging vigorously.

Xio nodded in satisfaction, stuffed the stack of papers into the leather pouch, and tied it around Susie again.

Susie howled and ran off very quickly.

…

In the Hall family's luxurious villa.

Audrey was sitting on the sofa of her own living room. She was holding a letter opener and was trying to open the letter before her.

It was a letter sent by one of her brothers from the Balam Empire in the Southern Continent. There was a parcel that came along with the letter.

At that moment, she saw Susie push open the half-closed door. The dog dashed over quickly.

Susie sat on the carpet before Audrey and pawed at the leather pouch.

"You really are an excellent messenger!" Audrey wasn't stingy with her compliments.

Susie looked back at the door. It induced vibrations in the air and said softly, "Your friend is very serious. When I saw her, she reminded me of the time when a hunter came to train us."

She had been a complimentary gift when Count Hall bought hunting dogs.

Susie, your Loen is getting more and more fluent. There are just a few problems with your logic in using the language… Audrey watched as her golden retriever took off the pouch on her own and skillfully pulled open the zipper.

She gave Susie a look and immediately understood. She stood up and ran to lock the door.

"… There's no result so far, but we found that some vagrants disappeared around the Backlund Bridge borough. Though, we can't know for sure that it was Qilangos. Perhaps the vagrants merely changed their movement

patterns suddenly…" Audrey flipped through the investigation report and seriously wondered how she should reply to Xio and Fors.

I'll tell Xio that as long as she can track down Rear Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, I'll buy the Sheriff potion formula for her… No, that's not friendly enough. It would make her feel an inferiority complex. Yes, I shall say, "Xio, I've prepared your reward. As long as you can complete the task, four hundred and fifty pounds will be yours…" Sigh, as far as the main ingredients for the Telepathist formula, I've only found the Farsman Rabbit's spinal fluid. I still need the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland… Glaint, Xio, and Fors have yet to find it…

Audrey, cheer up. At least you've digested the Spectator potion completely!

Once you put together all the ingredients, you'll become a Sequence 8 Beyonder!

…

Audrey reined in her thoughts, picked up a pen and paper, and quickly wrote a reply. She stuffed it back into the leather pouch and entrusted Susie to make another trip.

She watched her golden retriever as she opened the letter that her brother had sent. She read it with a smile.

"My dear sister,

"I think you should come to the Southern Continent too. Come over to the colonized regions of the Balam Empire. There's abundant sunlight, fresh air, a clean environment, freshly caught seafood, various unique cultures, and the very kind and obedient Balam people who make good servants, as well as the smell of freedom.

"On the contrary, Backlund is cold and moist, the air is bad, there's always dust, and it's always gloomy. Plus, it's highly populated which leads to all

sorts of problems. Hmm, and the endless balls, banquets, and salons… The social events are so boring and insipid that I wouldn't want to stay for a minute. Dear sister, I believe you share the same feeling.

"I'm not running away from home. I'm merely seeking my own place in life, but our brother definitely doesn't think so. He's always been a selfish person. Of course, he wouldn't be stingy with you, because you can only claim a tiny part of the family wealth, while I would be his biggest competition in the fight for the inheritance within the ranks of nobles. After all, our father is a Duke who takes a long view. He definitely wouldn't be restrained by the rule that the eldest sibling will inherit the rank of nobility.

"As long as he feels that it's necessary, he would do anything. Just like when he sold off half the farmland and pastures to enter the banking industry, regardless of the strong opposition.

"I miss Backlund sometimes, mostly Father, Mother, and you. I miss the smile that you put on my face during those few years. You must've become the most dazzling gem in Backlund, but unfortunately, I'll only be able to return after two years. A career is a man's pride, while the outstanding young people in the Loen Kingdom treat the world as their stage."

…

"You can tell our dear aunt that the coastal regions in the Balam Empire are very suitable for vacations, and especially suitable for her, given how her joints ache and swell in the winter. I sincerely invite her to be my guest. If you can come with her, that would be even better."

…

"I didn't send you too many gifts. They're mainly things that are rich with the traditions and styles of Balam, such as the unique yellow silk, and the ornaments that are filled with traits related to the worship of Death.

"I remembered that you loved things regarding mysticism so I'll look around for you. The culture here is full of mystery."

…

After reading the letter, Audrey picked up a pen, paper, and writing board. She leaned back into the sofa, pursed her lips and wrote seriously, "My dearest Alfred,

"Although it has been less than a year, the little girl in your memories has grown up. I don't like mysticism anymore, so you don't have to search for those kinds of things."

Because it's very dangerous… Audrey puffed up her cheeks and added in her head.

She had heard of too many tragedies related to mysterious objects when participating in Beyonder Gatherings and from stories Xio and Fors recounted.

She thought and declared excitedly, "I'm now interested in biology. Recently, I've been in awe of the Rainbow Salamander. Can you ask around for me and find out where I can find one of these creatures, or if they have a complete corpse that has been preserved?"

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CHAPTER 177
SUDDEN TURN OF EVENTS

Audrey stopped writing after she finished sharing some interesting news and scandals about aristocrats. She then adopted a serious pose as she recalled something.

With her exceptional memory as a Spectator, she arranged the information that she had received from her father's teachings, as well as the news she heard during banquets and salons into paragraphs.

After creating a draft in her head, Audrey penned, "As for the political situation in Backlund you asked about, it's not within my area of interest. I can describe it to you only based on my own impressions and the details that I happen to know.

"Some time ago, Father told me that after the abolishment of the Grain Act, the prices of crops were declining rapidly. The rent of farmland and pastures were also plunging, but I don't know the exact magnitude. I can only explain it to you with this example.

"As you know, Duke Negan is an aristocrat who owns the most land outside of the royal family. It's said that he owns more than 12,000,000 pounds worth of farmland, pastures, and forests. Last year, his land earned him a historic 1,300,000 pounds in rent. But this year, it's forecast that his rent will only be 850,000 pounds, a whole 450,000 pounds less. That's more than the entirety of the assets that I'm entitled to.

"Without any further explanation from me, I'm sure that my dear brother will understand the behavior of most old-fashioned nobles. They're proud of being landowners, and their income is derived mostly from rent. They place

a heavy emphasis on their appearance and would maintain their current lifestyle even if they have to go into debt. They spend tens of thousands of pounds on the upkeep of their castles each year, many more thousands on clothes and jewelry, as well as their persistent hunting activities, social banquets, and the occasional lavish weddings and funerals, etc, etc.

"With the decrease in rent, according to my knowledge, a good portion of the nobles have met with financial difficulties. Because of this, Count Wolfe has sold 84,000 ares of land in the countryside and gotten 29,000 pounds in return. Viscount Conrad has also sold his art collection worth 55,000 pounds to a national art gallery.

"Other than a few visionary nobles who had long shifted their focus to steel, coal, railroads, banks, and rubber industries, the rest of the nobles have been severely affected by the Grain Act. Let us praise our dear Count Hall!

"Father told me that the financial distress will loosen the control the nobles have over politics. As you can imagine, the number of ministers with blue blood will decline from the next year onward.

"In a bid to secure funding, the Conservative Party and the New Party have promised to confer upon anyone the noble titles as long as they donate a sufficient amount of money and lack any criminal records. Of course, the caveat is that the person who donated the money must own an amount of land befitting of a noble.

"One example is the rich Mr. Syndras. He purchased the lowest area of land expected of a baron, 60,000 ares, then donated 100,000 pounds to the Carleton Club and 400,000 pounds to the Conservative Party, and donations to charity amounting to 300,000 pounds. Finally, he succeeded in receiving conferment from His Majesty and became a highly-regarded baron. I've heard that there's a price list to this, 300,000 pounds to become a baron and 700,000 to 1,000,000 pounds for a hereditary baron. There is no clear price for the title of viscount or count, but I'm sure those are sufficiently ridiculous."

…

"This year, many nobles who are facing financial difficulties are starting to seriously consider the possibility of marriages with wealthy merchants. There have already been three marriages like this over the last two months. The betrothal gifts the noble women received are something to be envied.

"Also, the workers who protested the Grain Act did experience a decrease in the cost of living, but the quality of their lives has not improved. Instead, it seems to have deteriorated as the bankrupt farmers have entered the city and stolen their jobs by requesting lower wages. Thus, the wages of the laborers are dropping rapidly.

"I remember the day when Father asked me who I felt was the winner of the Grain Act.

"My dear Alfred, you must know the answer. You would definitely be able to obtain a hereditary baron title through your own efforts."

…

Xio Derecha and Fors Wall were returning to the Backlund Bridge borough after they received Audrey's reply.

Xio, with her messy blonde hair, was looking out the window of the carriage, her eyes were bright like two burning balls of flame.

She muttered the term "450 pounds" to herself repeatedly, as if reciting an incantation. Her strength and courage grew every time she repeated the term.

"Darkholme hasn't reported the status of the investigation today. Let's make a trip to his house!" Xio suddenly turned to look at Fors.

Darkholme was the leader of a triad in the Backlund East Borough and had control over many beggars and thieves.

Even though he looked very friendly with his chubby face that was perpetually adorned with a warm and amiable smile—Xio knew that he was a merciless scoundrel. He once broke the arm of a thirteen-year-old thief because the boy had hidden his profit.

Unless it was necessary, Xio was unwilling to meet Darkholme, but Darkholme was one of the few people who were most familiar with the vagrants in the city.

Fors pushed her slightly curly hair back behind her ear.

"As long as it doesn't delay my lunch."

"No problem! Perhaps I could treat you to an Intis feast after this week!" Xio promised in complacency.

"Must I thank God?" Fors asked as she laughed.

Unlike Xio, Fors was a moderate believer of the God of Steam and Machinery.

As they conversed, the two ladies switched to another public carriage and arrived at the Backlund East Borough, and arrived at Darkholme's house.

It was a terrace house located in a narrow alley. There were green plants hanging from the walls, the exterior looked relatively unkempt.

Xio walked to the door, raised her right hand and knocked in a unique rhythm.

The unlocked door opened with a creak following her knocks.

Xio's apparently confused expression immediately turned stern, like a wary lion's.

She took out a bayonet she carried with her and cautiously pushed open the door. She then slowly stepped inside.

Fors also stopped looking nonchalant, having produced a dagger of unknown origins.

They didn't smell any peculiar scents, but their rich experience told them that something was off.

One step, two steps, three steps. Xio and Fors entered Darkholme's house.

Then they saw a pale limb on a gas lamp, internal organs on a coffee table, as well as strips upon strips of flesh strewn on the floor and hung on the clothes rack!

Pieces of bone had been stripped clean and piled up near the door.

And amongst the bones was a head, its vacant eyes open. It was none other than Darkholme.

His chubby face still maintained the amiable smile, as if everything was normal. Furthermore, there was no stench of blood in the house.

As a former clinical doctor before becoming a best-selling author and Sequence 9 Beyonder, Fors has seen many death scenes more disgusting than this. She patted the tense Xio, who was on the brink of vomiting, as she surveyed the surroundings.

"Qilangos? Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos?"

"He realized that Darkholme was investigating the missing vagrants and tracked him back to his house?"

"Or could it be said that Darkholme had tracked him down, but ended up being caught?"

Xio fought back the urge to retch and said with a serious expression, "He sure lives up to his name as a merciless and crafty pirate admiral. The strangeness here also fits the description of his treasure."

"Crafty…" Fors was suddenly alarmed as she blurted out, "Could he be waiting nearby in an ambush against the mastermind behind the investigations?"

Xio froze for a moment before answering in a fluster, "That's highly likely!"

He was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, a powerful pirate with a mystical artifact, while they were just two Sequence 9's!

This was an extremely simple and easy contrast!

…

In the house opposite Darkholme's house, a man with a unique broad chin and dark green eyes in his thirties was standing by the window, coldly observing Xio's and Fors's opening of the door and slow entry.

He was none other than Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

The black glove on his left hand twitched as if it were alive. A layer of dull gold scales appeared on its surface.

Qilangos revealed a cruel and joyous expression as his dark green eyes turned pale gold and indifferent.

…

The moment Fors realized this, she dragged Xio to the other side and avoided the area just across the main door.

She then gritted her pearly-white teeth and took out a bracelet that was hidden by her sleeves.

This silver bracelet had three dark green, coarse stones which showed signs of burn marks and were rough and uneven.

Fors pulled out one of the stones and let out a low growl in ancient Hermes, "Door!"

She grabbed onto Xio Derecha tightly as the stone released a faint blue glow.

The figures of the two ladies turned indistinct, nearly invisible.

They saw many forms they found difficult to describe. There were even transparent objects that didn't seem to exist. They saw different colors, lustrous splendors which seemed to possess immense knowledge. They had entered the mysterious spirit world.

In this strange world that stood distinct from reality, Fors proceeded in a particular direction while pulling Xio along.

Seconds later, they exited their indistinct states and returned to reality—to Backlund.

But they were no longer at Darkholme's house, but instead arrived at an empty cemetery.

…

Qilangos, who was wearing his scaled glove, silently appeared at the door of Darkholme's house. He swept the interior with his cold gaze.

He froze for a moment, then creased his brows as he muttered to himself, "Traveler?"

…

In the cemetery.

"What are we going to do next?" Fors panted, sensing their predicament and feeling a lingering sense of fear.

The bracelet was a mystical item she had received along with the formula for Apprentice and its corresponding materials back during a fortuitous encounter of hers. Other than causing her to hear strange, faint murmurings during the full moon every month, it posed no threat.

There were originally five stones on the bracelet, each stone allowing her to traverse through the spirit world, technically allowing her to teleport. But now, there were only two stones left.

Xio calmed herself down and nodded solemnly.

"First notify Miss Audrey, then-then we call the police!"

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CHAPTER 178
THE SUBSEQUENT IDEAS

"Call the police?" Fors Wall repeated in surprise.

To Beyonders, lodging a police report seemed to be something of another world.

Xio paced back and forth as she tugged her coarse blonde hair.

"The scene of Darkholme's death is harrowing and creepy. As long as the police aren't blind, they would definitely pass the case on to the Mandated Punishers, the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, or the special department of the military. When that happens, we can leak some more information and let them know that the murderer is Qilangos. At that point, the entire city will be chasing after him.

"Our goal is only to look for Qilangos, not to capture him. With the 'help' of so many Beyonders, things would become much simpler and safer. Once Qilangos panics and makes a mistake, it would be our chance to claim our bounty. Heh heh, I'm referring to the discovery of his whereabouts."

Xio laughed dryly and looked at the appalled Fors.

"Do you think that the only way I know to deal with problems is by charging into them headfirst? The difference between us and Qilangos is as vast as the Desi Bay."

Fors nodded slowly and said, "Your understanding of yourself is absolutely right. You've done too many things of a similar nature. Hence, the losses that you've suffered is sufficient for you to advance to Sequence 8.

"Luckily, you're still rational enough regarding this matter."

Xio lowered her head to look at her bayonet. She thought for a moment and said, "… I have to be honest. I clearly sensed the approach of Death earlier. Qilangos was no doubt nearby. That was an aura evil enough to destroy us at any time. That triggered an instinctual response in me."

Fors wore her silver bracelet that had two stones left and thought seriously.

"I agree with your idea. Let's inform Miss Audrey first and lodge the police report after."

"Yes, regardless if it was Darkholme or his underlings who found Qilangos's traces, we could continue to investigate with that approach and find out Qilangos activity range and the location of his residence."

Xio creased her slim blonde eyebrows and said, "But Qilangos would definitely not remain in the same place."

Even as one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, even if he had the assistance of a mystical artifact, Qilangos had to be extremely careful in Backlund.

Even Nast, the King of the Five Seas, had once encountered disaster here and was nearly caught.

"No, what I meant was, to surmise or confirm the purpose of Qilangos's visit to Backlund based on the clues. Once we know what he's trying to do, no matter how he disguises himself or what tricks he pulls, he'll be exposed to us in the end. Then, our mission would be accomplished," Fors explained in detail. "Two years of novel-writing experience tells me that things would become simple once we grasp the crux of the matter."

Xio looked at her best friend in shock. She couldn't believe the woman had just made such a logical statement.

"I'm different from you. I'm merely too lazy to think, while you think with your muscles." Fors pursed her lips, leaned her head sideways, and smiled.

"Teasing me doesn't make you smarter…" Xio tried to smooth out her few strands of blonde hair that was sticking out. "Alright, let's head over to Empress Borough and tell Miss Audrey about this."

Fors nodded faintly and said, "So, what's our emergency contact method with Miss Audrey?"

Xio was momentarily put at a loss. She looked afar at the tombstone as she said, "She told me that pet dog of hers we saw earlier walks herself at least five times a day. Well, the next walk should be after lunch."

"In other words, we have to loiter around suspiciously outside Count Hall's luxurious manor?" The corner of Fors's lips twitched.

Xio suddenly looked sideways and revealed an obsequious smile, "Fors, or would you prefer to just sneak in?

"I don't think that would be difficult for you. It's what you're good at."

"A hereditary count for centuries, one of the most influential parliament members in the House of Lords, the largest shareholder of Varvat Bank, the fourth largest shareholder of Backlund Bank, the special consultant of the Royal Bank of Loen, the third largest shareholder of Suchit Bank in the Intis Republic, the second largest shareholder of Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, and so on. These are the titles of Miss Audrey's father. Xio, use your brain; how could a man like that not employ any Beyonders? Would he not have any prized collections? This is different from those destitute viscounts and barons!" Fors replied in exasperation. "I swear in the name of God, if I were to sneak in, I would be discovered and caught within five minutes."

Xio nodded continuously in agreement.

"Let's wait for the golden retriever then…"

With that said, she led the way. After she took a few steps forward, she spoke with her back facing Fors, "Uh, well, I will compensate you for your losses and the damages in the future. I'm referring to the stone, of course."

Listening to that, the corner of Fors's lips lifted and she said, "I was saving myself.

"And, Xio, you're going the wrong way!

"God, if you were an Apprentice and ended up becoming a Traveler in the future, it would be a disaster!"

…

Outside Count Hall's luxurious manor.

Xio and Fors hid behind an Intis parasol tree and secretly observed their target building in silence, watching the people walking to and fro.

After God knows how long, they finally saw the golden retriever come out from a hidden hole under the wall. It pricked up its ears and looked to its left and right, appearing very cautious.

Just as Susie started taking its walk happily, a black male dog popped up from nowhere. It fawned on Susie and started running around in circles.

"This is the first time I'm seeing a dog show such a humanlike reaction. Just how much does it hate that black dog?" Xio sighed.

She could tell from Susie's gaze and facial expression that there was obvious detest.

Fors smiled and said, "It's just like encountering a rash, disgusting, and persistent lecher."

Seeing Susie attempt to speed up to escape the black dog's pursuit, Xio stood up do administer "Justice."

"My ruling is for you to leave her alone!" Xio shouted with a mask of solemnity.

The black dog was taken aback and immediately scampered away with its tail between its legs.

Susie let out a breath of relief and slowed down. It barked politely and wagged its tail.

That was close, I nearly said "Thank you" to them… The golden retriever thought in joy.

That would've been a very awkward situation…

…

A melodic tune slowly came to a halt as Audrey picked up the latest intelligence Xio and Fors had delivered and read it with knitted brows.

She closed the piano cover and stood up elegantly. She paced back and forth in her piano room and considered her next course of action.

Qilangos is a very dangerous man… If Xio and Fors continued investigating, they might end up in danger… It might even expose me… Yes, I should just proceed according to their suggestion. Oh yeah, it's another two hours until the Tarot Club. I wonder what Mr. Fool would suggest? If he's still not interested, I'll discuss it with The Hanged Man carefully… Audrey gradually calmed herself down.

This was the first time she had encountered, or perhaps was described as being placed in such a perilous situation. There was already one death!

Three in the afternoon.

Audrey's vision recovered from a crimson and blurry state before seeing the boundless gray fog that didn't belong to reality, the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant, the long ancient mottled bronze table, and The Fool who was always engulfed by a thick layer of fog. Lastly, she saw The Hanged Man and The Sun.

At that moment, Audrey's tense and anxious emotions seemed to relax—she felt so safe, so calm.

*I'm participating in the Tarot Club that doesn't belong in the material world, and I'm dealing with Mr. Fool who's nearly a god. Qilangos and I are on different levels… *Audrey sat in an upright position proudly. She lifted her chin slightly and greeted cheerfully, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool! Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man! Good afternoon, Mr. Sun!"

After they greeted one another, Klein saw that Miss Justice was indicating her desire to speak; therefore, he nodded faintly to express his permission.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wonder if your adorer has received the compensation of 300 pounds?" Audrey asked, holding back her urge to talk about Qilangos while she showed concern over her leader's adorer.

Klein smiled and said, "I didn't pay close attention to this matter. But as my adorer didn't request for additional help, I suppose he has already received it."

Yes, I've checked multiple times. There are 300 pounds lying in my anonymous bank account… Klein added in his head happily.

"That's great!" Audrey relaxed and looked across her. "Mr. Hanged Man, there's been progress regarding Qilangos."

Alger suddenly sat up straight. He couldn't hide his excitement as he asked, "Where is he?"

"Unfortunately, he noticed our investigations just after we discovered his tracks. He killed one of the personnel involved." Audrey repeated the highlights of Xio's and Fors's story and explained their follow-up plan in detail.

Alger nodded faintly and said, "I'll pay close attention."

Then, he turned to the side and looked towards the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Under the vacant gaze of The Sun, Derrick, who listened but didn't understand anything, he said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, if I were to find out Qilangos' true intention and the very important and magical item that he intends to obtain, please allow me to recite your name and inform you through the ritual."

He didn't repeat his request for The Fool's adorer to provide him assistance. As he brought it up before and The Fool had given his answer, there was no need to harp on the topic. Otherwise, it might provoke the god.

Hence, Alger made it clear that his intention was only to report his findings.

If the final temptation was sufficient, he believed that Mr. Fool's adorer would definitely appear.

That works? Audrey widened her eyes.

I should've asked for the right to report as well. I might be able to gain Mr. Fool's guidance occasionally… She thought with regret.

Under everyone's gaze, Klein leaned back into his chair and nodded faintly. He replied slowly, "You may."

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CHAPTER 179
PRAISING MR. FOOL

Alger heaved a sigh of relief when he heard The Fool's answer. He lowered his head and humbly said, "Please allow me to thank you in advance."

*That's because I'm also curious… curious about the item Qilangos is searching for. I want to know about the item that can allow a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed to have the strength of a Sequence 4… I'm also curious about what a pirate admiral is going to do in Backlund… *Klein smiled, maintaining his profound posture.

*It's not like I've promised to provide assistance after I hear your prayers! *He emphasized in his heart.

But now, he was a lot more confident than before. Now, he had actual allies and the mysterious Mr. Azik who was currently in Backlund.

If it was absolutely necessary, Klein was willing to use the bronze whistle to enlist the help of Azik. Of course, he definitely wouldn't mention the Tarot Club. He would probably say he got information from some random source.

There were still two problems that existed in this matter. First, Klein was only limited to a cooperative relationship with Azik. It wasn't necessarily the case that Azik would provide assistance unless he was interested in what Qilangos was doing or the mystical item that he was after.

Second, Klein was unsure of just how powerful Azik was. Even if he had made the assumption that Azik was a High-Sequence Beyonder, he had to consider the fact that his memory loss might have weakened his abilities.

After all, knowledge was usually equated with power, and the lack of knowledge would definitely diminish Azik's power.

If that was the case, Klein couldn't guarantee that Azik could deal with Qilangos, especially with the latter wielding the Creeping Hunger. Klein was afraid that he would be placing Azik in danger so he was unwilling to trouble Azik unless he absolutely had to.

Now that I think about it, Mr. Azik's terrifying messenger can be summoned with the bronze whistle… No, that thing doesn't look like a messenger at all; it could take the role of an evil boss! So, even if Mr. Azik cannot beat the Creeping Hunger augmented Qilangos, he should be able to defend himself easily and have enough power left to save The Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and her partners… Klein shifted his posture as he thought, still leaning against the back of his chair. He propped his right leg over his left.

The Hanged Man Alger looked at The Fool and spoke once again, "I'm about to receive a batch of pages from Emperor Roselle's diary. I believe that I can present them to you in the next gathering, or the gathering after that."

According to the arrangement of the Church of the Lord of Storms, Pritz Harbor was under the jurisdiction of the Backlund diocese. Thus, Alger could enter the capital and wait for Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos to show himself under the guise of reporting about his previous voyage.

Backlund had been the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms until the end of the last epoch, having shifted their holy altar to Pasu Island only after the establishment of the Loen Kingdom. Regardless, the status of the Church of the Lord of Storms in Backlund was second only to the headquarters of the Seven Great Churches. One could imagine the information the Church of the Lord of Storms held.

Under these circumstances, Alger was confident that he would be able to collect pages of Emperor Roselle's diary in the name of research. After all, they were indecipherable at present.

Klein allowed joy to color his tone, as he said with a gentle nod, "Very good."

What he was really feeling right now was a mix of joy and worry. He was happy that he could see several pages of Emperor Roselle's diary soon. They might contain a lot of useful information, but he was also worried about what he had to give The Hanged Man in return. After all, no one knew if The Hanged Man would be interested in the contents of the diary, or if the content was valuable enough.

*Even a Seer is unable to determine that in advance… Must I really let my "adorer" help him? *Klein gave a silent sigh.

Audrey Hall hurriedly spoke up when she saw the conversation between The Hanged Man and The Fool end.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, may I recite your name and inform you using a ritual should I receive any timely and useful information?"

Timely… Look, Miss Justice's choice of words is so refined. Compared to her, you are too vulgar, The Hanged Man! Klein nodded slightly, saying past the fog, "You may."

Great! Audrey secretly clenched her fists.

At the same time, Klein turned to look at The Sun, Derrick Berg, who had been silently listening to their conversations. He spoke, his tone was peaceful, "The same goes for you as well."

"Yes, Mr. Fool." Derrick lowered his head.

The majestic palace was silent for a few seconds before Audrey spoke, "I need the complete pituitary gland of a Rainbow Salamander."

One of the main ingredients of the Telepathist potion? Hanged Man Alger nodded slightly as if he was contemplating.

"I don't have it. To be honest, I've only seen this creature in textbooks." The Sun, Derrick, heard the term automatically translated to him as Phantom Netherdrake.

What kind of textbook would discuss a supernatural creature? How envious… I can only get information like that at a Beyonder gathering, through word of mouth, or through a crumpled piece of paper. There's no system in place, and my search for knowledge lacks organization… I'll find a way to trade for the Sun's textbook in the future! Oh, he was interested in the formula for the Bard potion… Audrey thought, a little envious.

At that moment, Alger looked at The Fool, then retracted his gaze. He then looked opposite him and said in thought, "I might have a way of obtaining the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander."

Without waiting for Audrey to speak, he added on, "But it's under the premise that Qilangos is found. When the time comes, the complete pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander would be equivalent to the extra compensation that I owe you. Miss Justice, you might not know, but these creatures are nearly extinct, and we can only find traces of them in primitive islands in the Sea of Fog, the Berserk Sea, or the Sonia Sea. Not many people have the coordinates to these Islands. Heh, if you're interested, we can make a deal, for I am one of the few who knows how to get there."

I'm also interested in those primitive islands… Klein silently listened to their conversation.

Thinking about the extinction of the Rainbow Salamander, he suddenly recalled the joke he cracked with Old Neil—the Dragons and Giants Protection Association. He let out a sigh in his heart.

Audrey became thrilled after hearing that. She fought back her emotions as she said, "I once dreamed of going on a voyage in search of these primitive islands to take in the history."

My Goddess, the Tarot Club is too powerful, too wonderful! To be able to recruit a member who has the coordinates of the primitive islands! Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey couldn't maintain her Spectator state as a smile crept across her face.

Primitive islands? Klein froze for a moment, then thought about a page of Emperor Roselle's diary that he had seen, the one where the Emperor described himself as a pirate king!

He said that he discovered an unnamed island with many supernatural creatures when he and his Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were traversing the Sea of Fog on an unsafe sea route.

Could that be the so-called primitive island? How unfortunate, the Great Emperor didn't include any coordinates in his diary. Perhaps the information will be in some future pages, but as of now, I haven't received any pages of his diary in chronological order… Klein was filled with regret and anticipation.

The Sun Derrick was already confused by the terms "Sea of Fog,""Berserk Sea,""Sonia Sea,""primitive island," etc.

He felt more and more certain that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man belonged to a different world than he did.

After collecting herself for a few seconds, Audrey asked curiously, "Does the near-extinction of the Rainbow Salamander mean that the Spectator pathway will be severed soon?"

"No, there will definitely be substitute materials." Alger gave a definite answer.

"What substitute materials are there?" Audrey's eyes brightened as she asked.

Alger shook his head, replying without revealing certain profound truths, "I don't know. Perhaps the members of the Psychology Alchemists might know."

"Then how can you be so sure that there will be substitute ingredients?" Audrey didn't understand.

Alger laughed and said, "You will understand in time. Or do you have something to trade for the information right now?"

"I guess I'll wait." Audrey pouted and sighed. She also dismissed the idea of asking Mr. Fool.

There's no use in me knowing for the time being… The Hanged Man will definitely ask about something regarding Rear Admiral Hurricane, and I cannot be dragged too deep into that matter… She suddenly felt like praising her intellect.

But what she never expected was that Mr. Fool was feeling very disappointed at that moment.

Klein was rather curious about the secrets which Alger's words held. Unfortunately, Miss Justice, who was the best assist all this while, didn't choose to go through with the transaction.

No matter what method they chose to perform a transaction, the contents of the deal couldn't be hidden from the owner of the fog!

Well, even if the Rainbow Salamander is nearing extinction, the Psychology Alchemists are still giving out formulas listing it as an ingredient instead of providing a substitute. Does this mean that the Psychology Alchemists are in possession of the coordinates of certain primitive islands? Or could they be working together with an organization that has the coordinates? Klein wondered.

After the end of the transaction discussions, Klein looked around, then turned to The Sun. He asked in a gentle tone, "Does the City of Silver still believe in gods?"

Klein was merely an official member of the Nighthawks and had no access to deeper mysticism knowledge. An example would be sacrificial rituals. Thus, in order to refine his understanding of performing sacrificing dedicated to himself, to move materials in the mysterious space above the gray fog, as a Sequence 8, Klein needed to learn it as soon as possible from other sources.

He came up with three methods after continuous consideration: First, he was going to ask Spirit Guide Daly, who was adept at ritualistic magic whilst also being a deacon. But this might invite suspicion from her; thus, Klein could only patiently wait for an opportunity. Second, he could ask Mr. Azik, but Klein couldn't guarantee that he would be able to recall the knowledge in this area. Third, he was going to use a roundabout way to ask Sun, who lived in the City of Silver.

Klein already had an idea of how he was going to do it while effectively maintaining his image.

Whatever he asked would be tied to the gods!

Derrick replied in a respectful tone, "We still believe in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God."

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CHAPTER 180
A SMART PERSON ALWAYS OVERTHINKS

Upon hearing The Fool's question, Audrey perked up her ears and entered her Spectator state. She waited for The Sun to answer.

She had always been curious about where the City of Silver was and what was so special about that place, but she couldn't bring herself to ask. It touched upon his privacy after all.

At that moment, Mr. Fool was asking personally. It was like finishing the first volume of an outstanding detective novel she had been reading for a long time, and she finally had the chance to buy the next volume!

The Sun's answer didn't disappoint her. They didn't believe in the mainstream seven orthodox deities, nor did they believe in Death as the Southern Continent did. They also didn't believe in the hidden existences, evil gods or devils—Primordial Demoness, Hidden Sage, Dark Side of the Universe, Chained God, or the True Creator—which The Hanged Man had told her before.

The City of Silver is really special! They actually worship the Creator Himself! This is the primordial worship that Mr. Hanged Man described, right? Hmm, the description of omnipotence is a little strange… Audrey stole a glance at The Hanged Man subconsciously and realized that he was nodding slightly.

Klein wasn't surprised at all. He purposely chuckled and asked in reply, "Even though He abandoned you?"

Abandoned? The Creator abandoned the City of Silver? Alger was shocked. Suddenly when he suddenly made the connection regarding a particular term.

The Forsaken Land of the Gods!

In the confidential information of the Church of the Lord of Storms, at the security clearance level that Alger, who was Captain—equivalent to the Bishop level—could access, the Forsaken Land of the Gods had always only been a name with no actual description. However, it clearly pointed towards the end of the Sonia Sea. From what he knew, even the Cardinals at the core of the church had no idea what the Forsaken Land of the Gods represented. But only the leader of the church, the Proxy of the Lord of Storms, knew something about the situation and seemed to be taking charge of the hidden mission to look for the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Alger had once made a bold guess when he equated the True Creator's holy residence which was promoted by the Aurora Order with the Forsaken Land of the Gods. But, unfortunately, The Fool hadn't confirmed his guess, so he couldn't be sure.

Now, he was shocked and surprised to find that the Tarot Club member using The Sun as his code name was very likely from the Forsaken Land of the Gods!

Mr. Fool knew where the Forsaken Land of the Gods was all this time, and he could pull someone from there to be a member of the Gathering! This is a hidden place that the Church of the Lord of Storms has been trying to find to no avail!

Alger looked at The Fool who was seated in the seat of honor at the end of the ancient long bronze table in horror. He could only see that he was leaning back in his chair in silence, engulfed by the thick fog.

Audrey wasn't particularly moved about it. The only time that she had heard about the Forsaken Land of the Gods was from The Hanged Man's question.

She wasn't particularly interested, so she failed to associate it to anything from what Mr. Fool said earlier.

The City of Silver has the legend about being abandoned by the Creator… Huh, Mr. Hanged Man seems to be deeply affected… What is he amazed and afraid of? Audrey nodded in puzzlement as she remembered the details of the moment.

"Yes, we believe that we will regain the Lord's favor in the end. Perhaps, it will be on the day the sun rises again," Derrick Berg answered in an uncertain tone. "We were once ruled by the giants' royal family, and we worshiped the Giant King Aurmir. Later, we were saved by the Lord and we will never betray the Lord again."

Ruled by the giants' royal family… It really is ancient. But it doesn't seem to match… Alger, who had guessed at something, suddenly recalled the description about the Second Epoch in the hidden chapter of The Book of Storms.

The Second Epoch was also known as humanity's Dark Epoch. At the time, the sky, ocean, and land were ruled over by dragons, giants, elves, mutants, devils, phoenixes, demonic wolves, and dead spirits. But in the end, the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom led humanity into defeating the supernatural creatures and ushered in the beginning of the Third Epoch, the Glorious Era, which was later known as Cataclysm.

*Giant King Aurmir… *Klein repeated the name in silence.

In various legends and myths, it was a great existence on par with the deities. Even now, there were still some places that worshiped him. Even the most famous and most expensive grape wine in the Intis Republic was named after Aurmir. It was said that the Giant King particularly fancied grape wine which was like blood.

Considering the fact that the Church of the God of Combat is in control of the complete pathway of the Warrior, which once belonged to the giants, can I assume that Aurmir was the ancient God of Combat? Klein guessed.

He nodded deliberately but didn't think any further about it. He then asked calmly, "Do you still offer sacrifices to this omnipotent God?"

"Yes, we still do. But since the day we were abandoned, we have never gotten any response." Derrick's voice had a hint of unconcealed pain.

Klein leaned against the back of his chair leisurely. He half-closed his eyes and said, "Describe the process of your offering ritual in detail."

Does Mr. Fool want to figure out the truth behind the City of Silver's abandonment? Or does He want to determine if the Creator still exists? Alger suddenly felt a shock through his body and he quivered.

Not only was he afraid, but he was also excited too. This was because he felt he was being made privy to the secrets between deities!

That made him feel like he had been elevated to a whole new level!

*I've been chasing after power, after strength. Didn't I do it to achieve this kind of feeling? *Alger leaned back, lifted his chin, and got carried away with his thoughts.

Mr. Hanged Man's mental state doesn't seem to be normal… Audrey looked at him with pity.

She finally understood that there might be some sort of shocking secret behind the communication between Mr. Fool and The Sun, which led to The Hanged Man's loss of composure.

After the Qilangos commission is over, I'll pay the price to get information about what Mr. Hanged Man learned today… I wonder if he would be willing to… Audrey thought in anticipation, yet was still a little worried.

Derrick didn't notice the weight that was hanging on his answer as he replied frankly, "We build opulent altars covered in the Lord's symbol. Every time we receive a bumper Black-Faced Grass harvest, we hold a sacrificial ritual.

"We use the monsters we capture in the depths of the darkness to use as sacrificial offerings. After we recite God's honorable title and the necessary prayers, we dance for Him and then kill the monsters, to let their spirituality and tainted blood dye the entire altar. If we haven't caught any monsters, then we use a sinner on the lowest floor in the City of Silver prison instead.

"Then, we turn the very first batch of Black-Faced Grass into food and serve it before the Lord.

"In the end, we sing praises in unison and end the ritual."

Since I was planning to offer a sacrifice to myself, I'm not picky about time, and the altar can be as simple as possible. The most important part would be to open a channel with the aid of the monsters' spirituality or the blood containing Beyonder powers to complete the sacrifice offering. Of course, this is under the premise that one will receive a response? How extravagant… Klein used his mysticism knowledge to analyze every step of the sacrificial ritual in the City of Silver before finally saying, "What are the corresponding prayers? What language do you recite them in?"

Derrick was also looking forward to this, so as to gain hints from Mr. Fool on how to shake off the curse, so he recalled it carefully and answered, "We use Jotun, which is also our common language.

"The corresponding prayers are,

"'Your devoted believers pray for your attention.

"We pray for you to take their offerings.

"We pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.'"

…

Klein listened in silence and intentionally let the engulfing fog slowly swirl around him. He nodded as though deep in thought and remained silent.

As for what he learned from it, he obviously wouldn't share it…

Alger found it very normal. How could the secrets of a deity be revealed directly to a mortal? Derrick also steeled his resolve to quickly grow in power, so that he could obtain something that could garner Mr. Fool's interest in exchange for his guidance.

After some more communication, Klein ended the gathering. He watched Justice's, The Hanged Man's, and The Sun's figures vanish before him.

He looked down and saw the boundless gray fog and crimson stars that seemed eternally immutable.

However, after he advanced to Sequence 8, he realized that he could connect even more stars. In other words, he could pull in more members.

At least two… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

He wasn't in a hurry to add new members. He planned to act as he had before. He would first wait and observe. If Justice and The Hanged Man had any recommendations, he could assess them first.

What I saw the last few times was when The Sun was praying. There was a clear crystal ball before him, but ever since I pulled him into the world above the gray fog, that crystal ball has never appeared again… Does the prerequisite needed to pull people in through the connection of the crimson star have something to do with having a special item around them? Or does every crimson star correspond to an item in reality, which, when it's connected successfully, it would return to the world above the gray fog?

I wonder if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man were the same… Let's just assume that's the case. In that case, if people without this special item were to recite: "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck." and allow me to hear their prayers, would I be able to pull them in?

I can give it a try in the future.

Klein didn't stay any longer. He wrapped himself with spirituality and stimulated a descent, leaving behind the lofty palace, the ancient table, and the twenty-two high-back chairs which sat immutably above the gray fog.

He had mastered the overflowing power of the Clown potion and eliminated the corresponding negative effects. Therefore, he wanted to try the ritual to summon himself!

*I wonder what I'll conjure this time… *Klein thought in anticipation and fear as he fell through the mad ravings.

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CHAPTER 181
DIFFERENT STATE

Klein didn't hurry to dispel the wall of spirituality when he returned to his room. Instead, he expertly took out a candle infused with sandalwood and placed it in the middle of his desk.

He then followed the steps for the ritual, lighting up the candle with his spirituality and scattering essences, extract, and herb powder herbs symbolizing good luck and mystery. He saw the flame alternate between being dull and bright as he took in the fragrance of peace and harmony.

Klein took two steps back and looked at the candle on the table. He then shouted in the language of the giants, "I!"

After a pause, he switched to Hermes, "I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

At that moment, the flickering flame fused itself with the harmonious scent to form an illusory vortex, a vortex that manically absorbed the spirituality.

After Klein finished reciting the incantations, the vortex stabilized to become a palm-sized circle of grayish-white fog.

After observing the fog, Klein took four steps counterclockwise without hesitation. He returned to the world above the fog, and as he expected, he saw ripples of light spreading from his high-back chair, accentuating the mysterious aura of the weird symbol—the Pupil-less Eye and partially contorted lines—on his chair.

He took in a deep breath and calmed his soul down using Cogitation before extending his hand toward the target.

At that moment, he heard the incantations that he had just recited. He saw the surging spirituality and the rippling light fuse to form an illusory door.

Compared to the previous time, the door was now completely formed and was etched full of mysterious patterns!

The patterns were the same as the symbol on the back of The Fool's chair, a symbol made up of the Pupil-less Eye and the partially contorted lines!

As he looked at the door, Klein focused his mind and willed the door open.

Without warning, ripples formed in the eternally immutable grayish-white fog and the majestic palace, like a stone being cast in a peaceful pond. The ripple spread in the direction of the Door of Summoning.

The sound of heavy scraping sound caused by friction could suddenly be heard. A slit appeared in the heavy, mysterious door. Beyond it, one could faintly see an immensely dark world, filled with countless indescribable, transparent figures. There were also streaks of different colors, lustrous splendour that harbored infinite knowledge.

At that moment, Klein felt an unimaginable, irresistible attractive force coming from beyond the door. He couldn't help but get pulled towards it.

Damn! Are you not giving me the choice? Just as he had that alarming thought, his body went through the slit and vanished into the darkness behind the door.

The dizzying, maniacal roars gradually died down. Klein finally came to his senses.

He saw a young man in front of him. The man was wearing an old shirt, had black hair, brown eyes, and average-looking facial features. The man had an

average build, was a little skinny, but his frame seemed to hide considerable power. He also had the obvious demeanor of a scholar.

… *Isn't that me?* Klein wasn't a stranger to scenes like this. He encountered something like this every time he looked in the mirror.

He nodded indiscernibly and surveyed his surroundings. He saw his bed with a white bedsheet draped over it. He saw his half top hat, tuxedo, and black windbreaker hanging on his clothes rack. He saw a bookshelf with quite a number of books, his neat table that only had one candle on it. He saw the candle flame emitting a grayish-white glow.

And now, he was floating in front of the palm-sized circle of grayish-white fog.

So, have I really summoned myself? It feels a little like an out-of-body experience… but there's also something a little different. Klein looked at the physical body belonging to him, toward "his" blank, vacant eyes and slipped into deep thought.

But he could finally confirm one thing: it was only his soul, also known as his Spirit Body in mysticism, that headed to the world of fog. The exterior appearance was that of the Astral Projection.

It's no wonder that I can directly see the Astral Projection surface of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun and confirm whether they were Beyonders or not when I was in the world above the fog. I could also guess their Sequence numbers… My physical body seems to be under some form of protection, perhaps from the power of the ritual, for me to stand with such stability and not lose my balance. It should be the same for Miss Justice and the others… Klein slowly got used to the current situation and started to analyze the conditions of both his physical body and soul.

He retracted his gaze and tried to move his soul, now fused with powers from the mysterious space.

Whoosh!

A cold wind started to blow, as it spiraled around the room. Klein savored the sensation of flying, joyfully making circles in the room.

I can also take on the role of a "messenger" in this city now… I wonder if I can carry physical items with me… He collected himself and stopped. He floated in the air and experimented with his other abilities.

He tried to grab a notebook from his bookshelf, but his hand passed through it.

It feels a little sticky, it's not like moving through air… I might be able to grab it after I become more powerful and able to better utilize the mysterious powers of the world above the gray fog. Klein once again tried grabbing a single piece of paper but to no avail.

After more than ten seconds of deliberation, he flew toward the clothes rack and extended his transparent hand into the pocket of his black windbreaker. He touched the Slumber Charms and the Requiem Charms that he replenished from a successful claim.

They were objects infused with his own spirituality, different from ordinary objects in supernatural terms. Thus, Klein wanted to see if he could carry them about.

His palm once again went through the charms, but he could clearly feel their existence. He felt the intertwining of spirituality, but he didn't have enough "strength" to pick them up. Of course, another explanation was that there wasn't enough spirituality within the charms to achieve a strong resonance with his current state.

The spirituality isn't strong enough… Klein thought as he moved towards the other pocket. That pocket stored the Flaring Sun Charms that he made with the stolen power of the divine blood and his own spirituality.

A warm sensation quickly spread all over his body, making his form turn more stable and his thoughts clearer.

He could take the thin gold piece out of his pocket. In the mirror in his room, the charm seemed to float out of the pocket on its own accord, similar to the descriptions in ghost stories.

I can move Flaring Sun Charms. I can also create sound using my spirituality… So I do have certain abilities in this state… Klein flew toward the mirror and stopped in front of it. He saw that only the thin gold piece was reflected. Other than that, it was only the furniture and darkness in the room caused by the drawn curtains.

After a few seconds of consideration, he placed the Flaring Sun Charm onto the bed before returning to the front of the mirror. He wanted to see if he could move through the mirror.

His vision turned dark. Klein's vantage point suddenly changed. He saw the room that was reflected in the mirror, the furniture that was accentuated by the weak sources of light. It made him feel as though he was hiding in an obscure corner, peeping into a tiny portion of the room.

I really can go through the mirror. But this is only an ordinary item which doesn't lead to some mysterious and strange world… Klein nodded and charged forward, once again returning to his room.

The success of carrying the Flaring Sun Charm gave him immense confidence. Hence, he attempted grabbing something else.

Mr. Azik's copper whistle!

The moment he touched the ancient and intricate object, he felt his spirituality expanding and freezing.

His illusory eyes turned into dark, burning flames.

It feels like I have gotten a little more powerful. My form is like a wraith's but without the strong sense of vengeance… Klein projected his current appearance by calming his mind.

This was one of the abilities of a Clown.

"Mr. Azik's copper whistle is truly fascinating." He nodded, noticing that he could now pick up pieces of paper with certain weights. He could also pick up his Slumber Charms.

How unfortunate. I can carry the silver ritual dagger, but the revolver is too heavy… Klein concluded his experiments and turned to see if he could use any spells in this state.

After serious tests, he concluded that he could conjure two spells, the first being a formless howl could shake the souls of his target and the second was inducing a state akin to freezing via contact with a target.

Klein came to a satisfied stop. He looked out the oriel window, towards the sunlight, and street covered by the curtain.

I wonder if I can move about during the day in this state… He muttered as he floated towards the window.

He then carefully lifted the curtain, creating a slit and allowing a small amount of sunlight to pass through the wall of spirituality and into the room.

Under the radiant sunlight, Klein felt his soul boil with a black fog. His powers were also being drained away, bit by bit.

He quickly released his grip, allowing the curtain to block the light.

I can't… Klein thought for a moment, then placed his gaze on the Flaring Sun Charm on the bed.

I wonder if the effect would be the same if I'm augmented with the divine blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun? He floated toward the bed and tried to grab the thin piece of gold.

But just as he touched the charm, the warm pure feeling formed a stark contrast with his burgeoning cold spirituality. It was like an existential conflict between fire and water.

Sizzle!

He tossed the piece of gold away as if he had been burned.

The power of Mr. Azik's copper whistle cannot inhabit my soul at the same time as the Flaring Sun Charm. Klein understood as he set the copper whistle down. He felt his spirituality shrink, and the black flames in his eyes extinguished.

In this state, both the spells I can use have been weakened… After another round of experimentation, Klein grabbed the Flaring Sun Charm, once again feeling the stabilizing and warm purifying effects the charm had on his Spirit Body.

He returned to the window and cautiously moved through the curtain.

The sunlight only felt warm on his body, but it didn't inflict any harm.

Not bad… Klein let out a mixed smile. He made his way past the wall of spirituality and cautiously flew out of the house with the intention of conducting more experiments.

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CHAPTER 182
WANDERER KLEIN

The weather in Tingen turned from refreshing cool to a bitingly chill in early September. However, the sunlight at three or four in the afternoon was still warm and soothing.

Klein went through the wall of spirituality and the oriel window. He floated in the air outside of his bedroom as he overlooked the people and carriages shuttling to and fro Daffodil Street.

Just then, there was a man in a gray labor uniform who suddenly lifted his head and looked over.

Klein panicked and wanted to hide, but he couldn't find any suitable cover.

When he didn't see anything to hide behind, he started to sneak back into his house. However, from the corner of his eye, he saw the man earlier merely glanced over the window. Then, his gaze followed a flying sparrow, but unfortunately, he lost sight of it.

In Tingen, birds could occasionally be seen.

Phew… I forgot that an ordinary person wouldn't be able to see me… Klein let out a breath of relief and felt that he had yet to get used to the situation.

As he grew more confident, he flew lower and went to a nearby spacious street where he floated above people's heads.

As he drew closer, Klein immediately realized that his "vision" was the same as his Spirit Vision. There was no need for him to activate it, but there was a restriction to its range.

Also, besides the aura and emotional colors, he could faintly feel the existence of everyone's soul. They were blurry, illusory, and transparent.

In this state, I think I could bypass a person's body and directly attack their soul… Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He circled around and prepared to test his fastest speed. Hence, he flew towards Iron Cross Street with all his strength.

It didn't take long before he came to a halt and arrived outside the apartment he used to stay in.

It should be about the speed of a car on the highway… It's a pity that I still can't go in and out of the spirit world; otherwise, it'd be perfect… But if I were to be lost in the spirit world, it's said that the consequences are very severe. Just as Klein finished his self-evaluation, he felt low-spirited and gloomy. There was an unspoken pressure.

He looked around and felt that Iron Cross Street was engulfed with gloominess that ordinary people could see, a darkness that the sunlight couldn't dispel. There were layers of numbness, despair, pain, and other emotions overlapping, as though they were corporeal.

It feels just like what I experienced when using spiritual perception on this street when I first became a Seer. Iron Cross Street's Middle Street and Lower Street hasn't changed to this day… I wonder how many years it took to accumulate such oppression and gloominess… Klein recalled the past and sighed as he flew up to the third floor of the surrounding buildings.

He finally felt sunlight and shook off his depression.

Klein flew along Lower Street and, from time to time, he would see residents who were dressed in tattered clothes, looking expressionless and malnourished. He even ran into two bodies that had died of natural causes —prolonged starvation and malnutrition with a sudden infliction of an illness.

There were countless people who died in agony every month. However, the bankrupt farmers and slaves that surged in from the Southern Continent replaced them very quickly… Klein sighed in silence and changed direction and flew south.

That was the industrial area of Tingen. The steelworks, lead factories, ceramic factories, printing factories, metalworks factories, machine construction factories, and other factories all built right next to one another.

As he flew, Klein saw towering chimneys. He saw dust filling the air and a thick gloominess that was only slightly better than the that of Lower Street.

It was crowded with emotions of exhaustion, pain, pessimism, and numbness. Laborers who were in their thirties were considered the minority.

Just as Klein wanted to fly lower to look at the area more closely, he suddenly felt weak. It was a weakness that came from inside him.

My spirituality can't withstand the duress… Klein became alarmed. He was in a hurry to return home, but he suddenly thought of a better possibility.

I was "summoned" out. If I were to end the summon, I would return naturally! He calmed down and carefully felt the surrounding environment and his status. Unsurprisingly, he discovered something that was connected to him from infinitely far away but also infinitely close to him. It formed an intricate tether to him.

Through this connection, Klein clenched the Flaring Sun Charm tightly and willed the strong desire to end the "summoning."

A massive and terrifying suction force overwhelmed him as his figure went from transparent to nearly invisible, and in a flash, he vanished from the corporeal world.

…

Silence was everywhere in the boundless gray fog, and there were illusory crimson stars that twinkled. Klein reappeared in the lofty palace that looked like the home of a giant, as he sat in the seat of honor at the ancient bronze table.

The entire procedure went well… Furthermore… Klein looked at his Spirit Body in pleasant surprise and saw that it contained a warm and pure gold portion.

The Flaring Sun Charm!

I actually brought something corporeal into the world above the gray fog! He held the charm with a smile and fiddled with it to make sure it wasn't an illusory item.

Klein stood up and paced back and forth, feeling completely gratified. He thought to himself in anticipation.

As expected, ingredients and items can be brought into this mysterious space!

I just need to find the correct way!

However, this method is quite complicated. It needs me to do quite a bit before it reaches the destination. Furthermore, if I were to be summoned by the members all the time, it would damage The Fool's image. I can only do that occasionally, or after I understand it more. I can design an incantation that summons The Fool's "adorer," but it will similarly be directed at me…

… I'm not some born laborer. Why must the incantation point towards me? When the time comes, I can conjure what seems like a messenger or a more unique "adorer" and let it deal with the dispatch and collection of materials…

Ideas popped up one after another as Klein contemplated. But due to the limitation of his capabilities and knowledge, he couldn't put them into practice just yet.

As he became even weaker, Klein didn't dare to stay any longer. He used his spirituality to envelop himself and simulate the feeling of descending.

In the blink of an eye, he returned to his bedroom. He saw splendid sunlight pouring in through the gap in his curtains.

He examined his body and made sure that the Flaring Sun Charm wasn't brought back but left above the gray fog.

When I've gotten enough rest, I'll repeat the summoning ritual at dawn to bring the Flaring Sun Charm back to reality… Sigh, it would be great if I could maintain the state a little longer. That way, I would be able to investigate the houses with red chimneys. It's such a pity that I can't do it yet. I could only fly long enough to investigate a few houses before having to return above the gray fog and rest for half a day. The efficiency would be just as low. Klein walked before his desk and put out the silent burning candle.

After he packed his things, he didn't remove the wall of spirituality immediately. Instead, he sat down and took out a pen and paper to write a letter—a letter to Mr. Azik!

After he wrote the salutation of "Dear Sir," he pondered for a few minutes before penning:

"… I recently received news that one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Rear Admiral Hurricane, Qilangos, has infiltrated Backlund. He carries a

mystical item called the 'Creeping Hunger.' It provides an ability similar to a Shepherd, which is a Sequence 5 Beyonder that swallows different souls and obtains their corresponding powers. It's said that there is a limit to the number of souls that one can let out to graze, but the souls can be swapped out…

"… Qilangos seems to have many Beyonder powers, and I'm not sure what he's trying to do in Backlund… The news I received suggested that he might be after a very important, very mystical item that could make Qilangos a High-Sequence Beyonder or as powerful as a High-Sequence Beyonder…"

Klein fabricated his source of information to generally describe the situation with Qilangos, but it wasn't like Mr. Azik would look for a Nighthawk Captain to confirm it.

Klein didn't directly request assistance but made it seem like he brought up the subject casually to encourage Azik to be careful.

Regardless of whether Mr. Azik was willing to help, it wouldn't hurt to first lay the foundations! If Klein eventually needed to ask for help, it wouldn't appear out of the blue that way! Klein let out a breath slowly and started writing the main content of the letter.

"The mastermind behind all that has happened hasn't taken any further action, and I still haven't found any related clues.

"The reason why I'm contacting you so suddenly is mainly to ask for your guidance regarding sacrificial rituals. I came across something like that during a recent mission…"

With The Sun's description and Mr. Azik's answer to compare, I should be able to try a sacrificial ritual after that. By reversing the ritual, I should be able to bestow items… This would be a more suitable ritual for exchanging ingredients and items rather than summoning myself…

Yes, let's hope that Mr. Azik remembers the knowledge about this… Klein nodded slightly. He put down his pen without signing his name.

There's only one copper whistle, so I'm sure Mr. Azik wouldn't make a mistake with the sender.

Therefore, to be careful, Klein didn't leave his name.

After he folded the letter, he looked at his three-meter-tall ceiling. He picked up the copper whistle from the bed a little hesitantly.

**Perfect, let it squat and get the letter! **Klein emphasized inwardly before lifting his right hand and putting the copper whistle to his lips. He puffed up his cheeks and blew hard.

The whistle didn't produce a sound, but Klein's acute senses noticed that the surroundings had instantly turned cold.

He activated his Spirit Vision and saw that there were blurry yet glistening white bones surging out of his study desk like a fountain as it rose in height.

The white bones quickly gathered together and turned into an illusory yet huge monster. Its head tore through the wall of spirituality and reached somewhere unknown.

Klein looked at the white skeleton's thighs and body, as well as its arm that hung down. Seeing its right palm open up, the corner of Klein's lips twitched as he tossed over the folded letter.

The large bony palm did a sweep and caught the letter firmly.

Then, Klein picked up his copper whistle and blew again without hesitation.

The monster crumbled in an instant, transforming into bones that fell onto his desk before sinking in and vanishing.

After doing all of that, Klein removed the wall of spirituality. In the sudden wind that stirred, he hobbled towards the clothes rack and returned the copper whistle to its original place.

Then, he quickly walked to his bed and planted his head into it.

The moment his body touched the soft mattress, he fell into a deep sleep.

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CHAPTER 183
A LESSON ON MEDIUMSHIP

After dinner, Klein engaged in small talk before reclining on the sofa. He picked up the recently delivered Awwa Evening News and started leisurely reading.

Benson wore a bitter expression as he sat opposite his sister. In front of him was the dining table which had been wiped clean by Bella. On it was grammar books, classic literature, accountancy notes, and other materials. In front of Melissa were her notes and stationery, including but not limited to pens, paper, rulers, compasses, etc.

"It's like I've been taken some ten years back. Back then, I was still a student at the Church's Sunday school," Benson complained, but he continued to study with his head down.

That's not too bad. This scene makes me feel the achievement of being a parent… Klein smiled and said, "Knowledge can change one's destiny, and diligence will result in glory."

I made up the latter half of that saying. I wonder if Roselle has said that before… He lampooned in his heart.

The room quickly became quiet except for the sound of pens scratching across pages or of books being flipped. Bella had finished doing the dishes and tidied up the kitchen before returning to her room on the first floor—a small room that was formerly the guest room.

Klein sipped on his Sibe black tea as he read the newspaper, occasionally engaging in small talk with his siblings. It was relaxing.

Suddenly, the gas lamps in the living room and dining room turned dark at the same time as if they had run out of fuel.

Benson and Melissa looked up towards the lamps, in an attempt to figure out the cause.

Klein also looked towards the lamps.

At this moment, he felt something touch his arm.

He was the only living person in the living room, but something had touched his arm!

His hair stood on end. Klein retracted his arm and turned to look over. He saw five thin, pale fingers growing on the tip of a tongue. Underneath them was an irregular row of sharp teeth!

Klein instinctively reached for his pockets. Within them were the Requiem Charms and Slumber Charms. But he caught a glimpse of a neatly folded piece of paper in the fingers' grasp.

A letter…

A messenger!

Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

At that moment, the five pale fingers prodded his arm again.

Klein saw Melissa about to stand up and check on the gas lamp. He reached out with his left hand and grabbed the letter, then he quickly retracted his arm and hid the letter under the stack of newspapers on the table.

He then saw the fingers, tongue, and the irregular row of sharp teeth fade away and disappear from the corner of his eyes.

With a thought, Klein tapped his left molar and silently activated his Spirit Vision.

He once again saw the five abnormally thin fingers. He saw the long red tongue adorned with sharp, white teeth. He saw them retracting back into the transparent face on the ground.

A second later, the face disappeared completely. The lights in the living room and dining room were restored back to normal.

"Strange…" Melissa pouted, finding no faults with the lamps even after a serious check.

*Why is the lady in our house responsible for such things, while the men watch from the side? *Klein shook his head and deactivated his Spirit Vision.

When spirits were willing to be seen and had the corresponding abilities, even an ordinary person could spot them. What happened just now was an example.

After discussing the problem with the gas lamps, the Moretti siblings became quiet once again. Benson and Melissa once again delved into the ocean of knowledge.

Klein used the newspaper as a cover and unfolded the letter with one hand. He placed the paper between the newspapers and started reading the reply from Spirit Guide Daly, "… I have to emphasize again, I prefer the title of Spirit Medium.

"I'm going to give you an positive response regarding what you asked. Yes, mediumship rituals can also be used on living beings, not just living humans.

"But this is troublesome and poses some level of danger. The souls left behind by the dead are pure. They have few impurities or chaotic thoughts.

We can communicate with them, asking them questions and receiving answers without any barriers. Of course, you can use the method of dream divination to directly receive images from them.

"But that cannot be replicated with living humans. The subject still has a will and would fight against unprotected communication between souls."

Klein's lips twitched when he read the letter. He confirmed that it was Daly herself who wrote this letter.

Unprotected communication… That really is the way she speaks…

Klein returned to the letter after taking a quick glance at his siblings.

"We only have two methods when faced with such a situation. First, we can use our powerful spirituality and sophisticated mediumship rituals to triumph over the will of the other person, engaging in a barbaric method of communication. Second, we can use medication to make the other party relax. What I use the most are the Amantha essence and Eye of the Spirit medication. Heh heh, I'm sure that you still have a lingering impression of those.

"After reaching the stage of channeling the soul, you must take note that you're also in a spiritual state, unlike when you're communicating with the souls left behind by the dead. In simpler terms, your spirituality is entering the spirituality world of the other party.

"Take note, a professional Spirit Medium wouldn't lack the means of protecting themselves under such a state. But you cannot do that. You would not be able to learn or use the techniques that I know of even if I explained them to you.

"So you have to maintain a certain level of lucidity and rational thought. Only through this method can you fight back against the torrents of the other party's random and chaotic thoughts before arriving before his spirit

and establishing communication. At this point, you'll be communicating at the level of the Body of Heart and Mind.

"At this stage, you have two options. One is to use a technique to forcefully read the memories of the other party, but you have to be very careful, for you cannot be sure if the things you're reading are the things that you want to know. If you indiscriminately receive a large amount of memories from a person, it's very likely that your soul would collapse. Furthermore, it will cause severe damage to your target's soul, sometimes even destroying them completely. Unless you're a professional Spirit Medium, I do not suggest using this method.

"The second option is to gently communicate with the other party's Body of Heart and Mind. No matter how you entered, whether it be through violence or medication, the target will definitely be in a groggy state. They would generally not be able to lie, just like you couldn't… no, you cannot recall what happened to you! Although I know you've definitely forgotten about it!"

Sorry, Madam Daly, I was very awake back then… Klein chortled inwardly as he lowered his gaze and read the rest of the letter.

"Such communication can allow you to obtain real answers, but they won't necessarily all be the truth. You should understand what I mean. As long as you read the news, you must have heard Emperor Roselle's famous quote. I don't remember the actual quote, but the essence of the quote is that what one says shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In short, a spirit might not remember everything because a lot of memories are in one's subconscious or collectively be in the subconscious. Oh, I shouldn't mention that. Dunn calls it the evil theories of the Psychology Alchemists.

"Thus, you must be able to guide the soul and be good at designing your questions, do you understand? The corresponding techniques include…

"These are all under normal circumstances. What should we pay attention to when we're trying to communicate with the soul of a Beyonder who has

gone insane?

"It's the same—maintaining your lucidity. You must not fall into a daze at all. This is because a Beyonder's spirituality is very potent and their spirit is filled with chaotic thoughts. Let me give an example. An ordinary person's consciousness is an island. The subconscious is the portion of the sea beneath the island. The collective subconscious is the surrounding sea. The sky belongs to the spirit world. As for a Beyonder, his 'island' might have a controllable active volcano. A lunatic's island might have a volcano that can erupt at any time. It would quake the foundations and pollute the 'sea.'

"When you come into unprotected contact with the spirit of an insane person, his chaotic thoughts might infect you, just like how polluted water in the sea would flow outward, spreading further.

"Yes, channeling his spirit under such conditions is like linking your 'sea' to his; thus, you need to pay close attention to this pollution.

"A few examples are when a Spirit Medium is careless when doing similar things and didn't use any protection. After that, they can develop mental problems similar to that of the target.

"Under normal circumstances, mental diseases are not contagious. But in the domain of mysticism, in the world of channeling spirits, they can indeed be contagious.

"Maintaining your lucidity and not being affected by the chaotic thoughts of the target are things that you must pay attention to. Following those would be the guided questions, which can be used to effectively communicate with an insane person.

"If you wish to try this, I suggest applying a Sedative Agent before doing so. The corresponding formula is available behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate. There's also the formulated product. It can be effective in helping you maintain rational thought during the process.

"Of course, you can also get Dunn to apply for help from the Backlund diocese. I'm very willing to see the spirituality state of an insane Sequence 7 Psychiatrist."

Lucidity and rational thought… That's my expertise. I maintained lucidity and rational thought even when my soul was being channeled… Of course, I'm not someone who lets confidence get to my head. I'll still apply for the Sedative Agent, Amantha extract, and Eye of the Spirit medication! Klein heaved a sigh of relief, a little eager to make the attempt.

He put down his newspaper and stood up. He then entered the bathroom and ignited the letter with his spirituality before tossing the ashes into the toilet bowl and flushing them.

That night, Klein once again tried the ritual for summoning himself and brought the Flaring Sun Charm back to the physical world and into his room.

He also didn't receive Mr. Azik's letter even though he had expected a swift reply.

Perhaps he needed some time to recall the knowledge… or perhaps, he's not free to give a reply for now… Or perhaps he's worried that he would interrupt my sleep. Klein dispelled the wall of spirituality as he speculated. He made his way to the bed.

…

The following day, Tuesday morning.

Klein entered the Blackthorn Security Company and knocked on the door to the Captain's office as usual.

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CHAPTER 184
BEHIND THE GATE

"Please come in," Dunn Smith said with a mellow and pleasant voice.

Klein turned the doorknob and pushed open the door to see the Captain having his breakfast. In his right hand was a cup of coffee emitting a rich aroma. On the plate in front of him, there was white bread toast and bacon.

Dunn placed the remaining sandwiched toast with butter into his mouth and ate it. He then silently pointed to the chair opposite his desk.

Klein didn't disturb his Captain from enjoying his breakfast. With a smile, he sat down as he waited patiently.

Dunn saw that he was in no hurry, so he relaxed back into his chair, picked up his coffee to take a sip, and swallowed the food in his mouth.

He took a napkin, wiped the corners of his lips and said, "What's the matter?"

Klein nodded seriously and said, "I've met Daxter Guderian, the doctor at the asylum and also member of the Psychology Alchemists."

As he spoke, he caught a glimpse of the magazine that was spread open before the Captain.

"Did he provide any news?" Dunn asked, crossing his arms.

Klein simply described, "He told me that before Hood Eugen went crazy, there was someone who visited him quite frequently. That person's name is

Lanevus."

"Lanevus…" Dunn massaged his temples. "I seem to have heard of it before…"

"He's the cheat who swindled at least ten thousand pounds," Klein reminded him.

Dunn thought for a while with a serious look on his face. He then shook his head to show that he had no memory of it.

Captain, you're not sensitive at all when it comes to money! Klein lampooned and told him the related story about Lanevus by highlighting the main points.

"The cheat falsely claimed that he had prospected and purchased an iron mine with rich deposits of iron ore. He raised funds from private individuals in Tingen and swindled more than ten thousand pounds. Someone I know from the Divination Club suffered a loss from this. In addition, a young woman was swindled into an engagement with him and is now pregnant with his child."

"He visited Hood Eugen multiple times before he went crazy," Dunn said in thought. "Sequence 8 Beyonder, Swindler? The Marauder pathway…"

Captain, your memory is actually good when it comes to this kind of thing… Klein found it funny as he reflected over it. He nodded faintly and said, "That was my guess as well.

"Because the steelworks company that Lanevus set up was in the South and the victims were of several different beliefs, the case wasn't passed to us in the end. Even if there had been evidence of Beyonder involvement in the case, it would've been passed over to the Mandated Punishers."

Dunn finally understood the ins and outs of the story. He looked at Klein with his deep gray eyes and said, "What do you want to do?"

Cough, Captain, can you please not be so sensitive… Klein replied with a mask of solemnity, "I want to talk to Hood Eugen via a mediumship ritual and figure out why Lanevus came looking for him. I want to know if that visit is directly related to him going insane."

Dunn nodded slightly and said, "Even if you hadn't applied to do it, I would've had a similar experiment done when we were certain that Hood Eugen is crazy.

"However, Daly told me that it's quite risky. Are you confident? I can ask for assistance from the Backlund diocese. It shouldn't be a problem to delay it for a few days."

Klein's main motivation to become a Beyonder was to study mysticism and find a way home. As it was a chance for practical exercise and he was confident enough, he was naturally unwilling to give it up.

"Captain, I've mastered knowledge on the subject. I'm confident about this.

"Of course, I'll require certain ingredients, such as the Amantha extract, Eye of the Spirit medicine, and Sedative Agent."

"Sedative Agent…" Dunn ruminated over the name and confirmed Klein's professionalism.

He remembered Daly mention that it was a liquid medicine that was rarely used yet was very efficient in mediumship.

Dunn Smith pondered for nearly twenty seconds and leaned back into his chair. He said, "Go ahead and fill out a request form. Then, collect what you need from behind Chanis Gate. Eh… I'm not sure if there are any finished goods. If there aren't any, pick up the ingredients you need and concoct the medicine accordingly."

"Alright," Klein replied happily.

He didn't get up but sat firmly in his chair.

Dunn massaged his temples. He thought carefully and said, "It happens to be my turn to monitor the asylum this evening… We can't visit Hood Eugen directly. No one knows if there are members of the Psychology Alchemists disguised as doctors, nurses, janitors, or patients in the asylum. No one knows if the Psychology Alchemists are monitoring Hood Organ either. Any action we take must be secret. We can't expose that Daxter Guderian has become our informant."

"… We'll go at dawn by sneaking in secretly."

"Yes, I'll keep guard while you perform the ritual to prevent any accidents from happening."

That'd be best! If Hood Eugen is just pretending to be crazy, while I use a mediumship ritual on him, It would be like I barged into the zoo and danced before a tiger… Klein relaxed and said sincerely, "Yes, Captain!"

He stood up and walked towards the door.

Just then, the corner of his eyes noticed the title of the magazine article the Captain was reading: "Donningsman Tree Sap in the Southern Continent's rainforests has had a significant effect on boosting hair growth."

… Klein retracted his gaze, opened the door, and exited the Captain's office.

Suddenly, there was a playful thought that flashed through his mind.

Actually, a Beyonder doesn't need to go through such trouble. If Old Neil was still around, he could design a ritualistic magic for hair regrowth. Then, he would pray for the Goddess's assistance. Whether one would be covered with hair and become a curly haired baboon, that's another story… What would the Goddess's response be? If it were me, I would definitely curse: Motherf*cker…

That thought suddenly tainted Klein's happiness with sadness, but there was also a hint of hilarity in the sadness.

He entered the clerk's office and sat before the Akerson Model 1346 typewriter and finished typing his application.

After Dunn Smith stamped and signed the application, he took it down to the basement and walked along the tunnel that was lit up with gas lamps, towards Chanis Gate.

Only at that moment did Klein realize something.

It would be the first time that he was going beyond the mysterious gate!

"I wonder what it looks like…" He quickened his pace with anticipation and came before the twin doors of the black gate.

He first passed his request to Seeka Tron, who was on duty that day for registration purposes. Then, Klein took back the document that now had her signature as well. He knocked on Chanis Gate and sensed how empty and distant the echo was.

He didn't hear any footsteps but within half a minute, the gate with seven Dark Sacred Emblems opened with a creak.

Chanis Gate opened up to allow a single person's passage before coming to a stop. Klein then walked in with the help of the gas lamps on both sides of the corridor.

Behind the gate, there was an elderly man with obvious wrinkles and thinning hair. He was wearing a classic black robe and holding a barn lantern.

The dim candlelight shone through the glass, illuminating the elderly man's expressionless face which was a mixture of light and darkness. His light blue eyes were like ice that had been frozen for a thousand years.

"Document," he said with his husky voice.

Klein had seen the elderly man before because at dusk every day, he would come out from behind Chanis Gate with his partners. They would pass by the duty room and take the hallway leading to Saint Selena Cathedral.

They were Nighthawks who had aged and volunteered to keep guard inside.

According to Klein's understanding, there were five of them who were keeping watch.

"This is my application." He passed the document in his hands to the elderly man before him.

The guard with light blue eyes raised the barn lantern and looked through the request carefully. After he made sure that there were no mistakes, he moved aside and let Klein pass.

Klein passed through Chanis Gate slowly. He had yet to take a good look around when he felt an indescribably chill.

It wasn't the cold of winter, but a chill that would make a human's spirituality shiver.

Klein lifted his gaze and looked afar. He saw candlesticks appearing on the wall in succession, and there were silver candles with carvings on them. The flames gave out a blue luster, without any flickering.

Creak!

The guard closed Chanis Gate, and the surroundings became extremely quiet.

There was a broad walkway before Klein, a walkway paved with ancient stone slabs.

On both sides of the walkway were stone doors labeled "Ingredients," "Medicine," "Information," and so on.

At the end of the walkway, there was a flight of stairs that connected to the lower floors. It extended into the dark as though it was connected to the abyss.

It should be connected to different sealed locations that have Sealed Artifacts. I heard that there are a few floors… I wonder which floor contains Saint Selena's ashes? Klein adapted to the brightness behind the gate and suddenly felt that there was something shapeless scraping against his skin. They were in strips, and every one of them chilled him to the bones.

He shivered, and he couldn't help but activate his Spirit Vision.

Then, he looked at the entire area behind Chanis Gate. It was filled with fine black lines. They were swaying lightly, occasionally clustered together, occasionally extended. They were tightly knitted without any gaps.

This… This is the sealing power behind Chanis Gate? Klein nodded indiscernibly. He reined in his thoughts and followed the guard. They went through a heavy stone door labeled "Medicine Room."

Very soon, he found the Amantha extract, the Eye of the Spirit medicine, and the Sedative Agent by following the alphabet labels.

He had seen the first two before, but it was his first time picking up the latter one. He saw that a blue fluid rippled in the translucent glass bottle. For some reason, looking at the fluid made him feel as though he had entered a mother's embrace.

On the bottle, there was a label. It showed the manufacturing date and the expiration date, which was still some time away.

Luckily, it can still be used… Klein took the three tiny bottles of medicine and walked back to Chanis Gate with the guard keeping him company. He shook off the feeling of coldness that reached the deepest corner of his soul and the creepy experience of being swept by the black lines.

When Chanis Gate closed, he couldn't help but look back. He mumbled to himself, "Staying in there for a long time would affect both the body and soul, right?

"It's no wonder the guards have to volunteer…"

…

Around dawn, Klein used a special technique to lock his bedroom. He pushed open his oriel window and jumped down.

The two-story height posed no danger to the present him. He landed steadily without faltering at all.

The Nighthawks' carriage was already parked opposite, waiting for him.

Without any exchange, Klein quickly arrived at Tingen Asylum in the North Borough. Following the Captain's instructions, he took a detour to one of the corners without a street lamp where he saw the waiting Dunn Smith.

"Let's go in." Dunn nodded faintly. "I've made sure that there's no one around."

"Alright." Klein quickly got closer.

As a Clown, entering an asylum… it keeps reminding me of a famous saying: "It's like returning home" He mused to himself.

He followed Dunn closely. With the aid of the wall's bumpy surface, they somersaulted into the asylum quickly and agilely with outstanding balance.

Dunn turned around and looked. He nodded slightly to give his approval.

The two of them crouched and silently moved through the hospital's small park and activity square. They then entered the three-story building in the asylum and arrived at the top floor where Hood Eugen's room was.

As Hood Eugen had the possibility of becoming violent now that he had gone insane, he had been assigned to a single room. Luckily, the monitoring Nighthawks hadn't wasted their efforts during the surveillance and had made a copy of the room key long ago.

Kacha!

The lock clicked lightly, and Dunn entered first. Klein projected his gaze past his figure and saw the person sitting on the bed.

Hood Eugen's face was long and skinny. His eye sockets were deeply concave and his blond hair was disheveled.

He was looking at the metal barred window with his grayish-blue eyes. He was looking at the crimson moon outside.

Klein closed the door to the room and chuckled as he casually asked, "Why aren't you sleeping?"

Dunn was taken aback and suddenly remembered that Klein was now a Sequence 8 Clown. Hence, he remained silent and backed off to a corner of the room.

Hood Eugen turned his head and looked at Klein. He chuckled foolishly and replied, "I'm waiting for my cake."

1. This is a meme of a recalcitrant offender who often gets send to prison and once said in an interview that going to prison is like returning home.

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CHAPTER 185
SPIRITUAL WORLD

*Waiting for cake? That really wasn't an answer that I was expecting… Of course, if I was able to anticipate the answer of a mental patient, wouldn't that mean that I was almost there myself… *The thought flashed through Klein's mind. He maintained his relaxed smile as if he was chatting with a friend.

"Who's going to send you a cake?"

Hood Eugen's expression fell instantly, his face long and depressed.

"No, there's no cake… There's no cake!

"You stole my cake!"

His voice suddenly became shrill as he glared angrily at Klein.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he let out a shout and opened his mouth, revealing two rows of white teeth.

Following which, he leaped from his mattress while salivating. He closed in on Klein with one step and extended his hands, attempting to grab onto Klein's shoulders. He wanted to drag Klein towards him and bite him.

Despite the sudden attack, Klein reacted quickly despite appearing a little flustered. He instantly bent his knee and squatted. At the same time, he tilted his body to the side and raised his left arm.

Oof!

His shoulder slammed into Hood Eugen's abdomen, causing Hood's eyes to turn white and drool to drip from his mouth.

But Hood Eugen didn't stop moving. He allowed the momentum to carry him down as he opened his arms in an attempt to pull Klein into a bear hug.

Klein tilted his body to the side and rolled over, his movements were smooth as though he had practiced them hundreds of times.

He pushed against the ground with his right hand and stood up with a somersault. He decided to go on the offensive and charged forward to restrain his opponent.

But at that moment, Hood Eugen only stood there blankly, his eyes losing focus, becoming vacant and lost.

Klein froze for a moment. He turned his head towards the corner of the room, only to see Dunn Smith, wearing a black windbreaker and matching hat, with his hands clasped tightly together and looking down.

The Captain has dragged Hood Eugen into a dream… Upon realizing this, he stopped his subsequent attack and took the opportunity to take out the silver ritual dagger that couldn't harm anyone. He used it to create a wall of spirituality which sealed the ward.

Klein then took out three candles infused with mint and placed them on the window in a triangular formation. One candle signified the Evernight Goddess, another the Mother of the Secrets, and the last represented himself.

Soon after, he set up a simple altar and used his spirituality to ignite the candles.

Just as he was about to warn the Captain, Dunn raised his head and smiled.

"Hood Eugen's dreams are a sea of chaos. There's no way to guide it."

Just as he finished his sentence, a luster returned to Hood Eugen's eyes. It was no longer vacant.

Then, the insane Psychiatrist moved his waist, letting out a comfortable yawn.

Klein was momentarily at a loss, so he remained quiet. He picked up a metal bottle containing the Amantha extract.

He dripped the transparent liquid extracted from the night vanilla, Slumber flower, and chamomile into the flames of the candle representing himself, allowing the serene aroma to spread around the room.

Hood Eugen's nervousness, anger, and relief completely vanished. He languidly sat down again on the edge of his bed and looked out at the crimson moon outside the window in a daze. His eyes once again lost their focus as peace was restored.

Klein also felt the peace that came with the night. He set the Amantha extract down and sat beside Hood Eugen. He wanted to find something to break down Hood's last line of defense.

Only with the removal of the last line of defense could he use the Eye of the Spirit medication to make Hood Eugen's soul slip into a turbid state.

After all, I'm not a professional Spirit Medium… He had already thought of an idea before coming. He fished out a set of tarot cards from his pocket.

This set of cards only had the twenty-two Major Arcana, so it was easy to carry around. It was a "weapon" that Klein had successfully applied for.

Each of the cards was lined with metal threads made from pure silver, each of them was able to kill undead beings. Their patterns were complicated and gorgeous, making Klein feel like they were a collector's item and not used against enemies.

Klein cut the deck with one hand and smiled at Hood Eugen.

"Let's play some card games."

"Cards?" Hood Eugen retracted his gaze from outside the window as he repeated the term in a daze.

Klein didn't answer, placing the deck of tarot cards into Hood's palm with a sincerity that could not be rejected.

Hood Eugen mimicked Klein's actions, trying his hardest to cut the deck with one hand to some success.

The attention of the mental patient was slowly drawn to the hard yet flexible, beautifully textured cards in his hand. He flipped over the first card:

It was the picture of a man in tattered clothes with his hands tied. He was hanging by his leg with a faint halo at his head.

The Hanged Man… Klein nodded in thought. He took the opportunity to grab the Eye of the Spirit medicine, dripping the amber liquid onto the candle flame—still the one representing himself.

An alcoholic fragrance spread forth, inducing an intoxicated feeling to anyone who took a whiff of it.

Hood Eugen spaced out bit by bit, his vision losing its focus. The deck of tarot cards in his hand fell onto the bed.

But he remained sitting upright, without slumping over.

Klein used Cogitation to fight back against the medicine's dreamy effects of turning light-headed and ethereal. He took out another metal bottle from his pocket and twisted the cap open before pouring the blue liquid into his mouth.

Sedative Agent!

The ice-cold liquid flowed through his throat, down his gullet, and into his stomach. Klein instantly felt unusually awake, without any sense of drowsiness.

He slowly exhaled, then familiarly took out the other essential oil extracts and herb powders, dripping them onto the two candles signifying the Evernight Goddess.

In the faint fog, he took two steps back and solemnly murmured in Hermes, "I pray for the power of the dark night.

"I pray for the power of the mystery.

"I pray for the Goddess's loving grace.

"I pray that you would allow me to communicate with the spirituality of the Beyonder beside me, Hood Eugen."

…

The incantations reverberated around the room, and Klein saw the flames of the candle, now dyed black, spread outward.

He didn't avoid them, nor did he guard against them. He allowed the dark "night" to envelop him.

In this unusually lucid state, he felt his spirit leave the protection of his body and enter a space akin to deep space. All around him was boundless, silent darkness. The sky above him was filled with countless indescribable, transparent figures. There were also streaks of different colors, lustrous splendors that harbored infinite knowledge.

The spiritual world… Klein was no longer a stranger to this.

Just as he had this thought, a foggy world appeared before him. It was a world enveloped by a faint tornado of light.

Klein knew that it represented Hood Eugen's spirit that represented his Body of Heart and Mind. Thus, he leaned over, digging into the wall that was the tornado.

In an instant, he saw countless specks of light pelting him. He heard the voices of thousands of people discussing something in whispers.

These murmurings were very chaotic and lacked any sense of logic. Some included praises for the elegance of some lady, then it turned into a description of the feeling of relief after using the toilet. Some started as a weep, then turned into frenzied joy…

The insane thoughts latched on and gnawed at Klein's spirit in a bid to assimilate him. But Klein maintained his lucidity and rationality, quickly flying towards Hood Eugen's spiritual world.

This is like a pleasant concert compared to the horrifying murmurings and howls I hear when entering the world above the gray fog… Klein smiled secretly and made his way through the tornado. He saw a groggy, translucent Hood Eugen.

This Sequence 7 Psychiatrist maintained the same state as he was in the outside world. He looked over with a dazed expression.

Klein stopped before him and asked softly, "Do you know Lanevus?"

Hood Eugen replied blankly, "Yes."

The light around them underwent a transformation as if Hood Eugen was revealing his "spiritual sea."

Quickly, the intertwining light revealed a bespectacled average-looking man who wore a sarcastic smile. It was the same Lanevus whom Klein had seen

in the arrest warrants.

Klein nodded in satisfaction and collected himself. He asked a guided question, "Why did Lanevus look for you?"

"He said…" Hood Eugen's voice slowly turned soft.

Suddenly, he changed into a more charismatic voice and laughed a little maniacally.

"Hood Eugen, this is the worst era, but also the best era. As long as you seize the opportunity, we can become the rulers of this world, we can become true immortals!

"As long as you're willing to help, I'll not only tell you the way to master your potion and avoid losing control, I'll also promise that you'll receive godhood qualities in the future—immortal godhood qualities!

"You should be able to see the presence behind me. My promise is 'His' promise. In some sense, the Psychology Alchemists are connected to 'Him.'

"Do not doubt. The Psychology Alchemists aren't strong enough at the moment. It is unable to provide you with enough help unless you're willing to stay at this level for the rest of your life."

The method to grasp your potion without losing control… Why does this sound like how I entice others with the "acting method"… Lanevus sure has lofty ambitions. He's only a Sequence 8, yet he's already talking about manipulating godhood qualities… Just what hidden presence is backing him… This guy seems to be plotting something, which isn't solely just to cheat people out of their money… Or could running scams just be his hobby? Klein had many thoughts as he listened on. When Hood Eugen stopped talking, he quickly pressed on, "What kind of assistance did Lanevus want you to provide?"

Hood Eugen didn't answer immediately, his spiritual world turned silent.

He then broke out into laughter. He replied erratically, "Help… Help… Help!

"Hahaha, I provided help! I provided help!

"I made…"

His words came to an abrupt halt as his blurry soul contorted. The light and darkness of the surroundings which represented the spiritual sea quickly turned incorporeal, forming a sinister, scary, dark altar.

On top of the altar was a cross. There seemed to be something hanging on the cross, as well as things that appeared indiscernible piled at the bottom.

The light and darkness alternated, and as the hanging item was about to become clearer, the entire spiritual world shook, as if it was experiencing a magnitude ten earthquake.

Holy shit! Klein had a premonition that something dangerous was about to happen. Without thinking, he turned and flew towards the chaotic tornado of thoughts in an attempt to escape.

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CHAPTER 186
THE HANDSOME CAPTAIN

Countless rays of brilliance drowned Klein as ravings of a million people filled his ears. However, Klein thought nothing of it. His abilities as a Clown told him that his spirit was being engulfed by a black shadow that was rapidly expanding.

The black shadow was a huge cross, and there seemed to be a person hanging upside down on it!

Kacha!

The chaotic tornado of thoughts unleashed its load outwards and turned uniform. Slowly, Hood Eugen's spiritual world disintegrated.

Klein noticed that he had exceeded his fastest flying speed from his previous trial; his soul had become significantly stronger after he briefly mixed with some of the strength from the mysterious space above the gray fog.

Just as the cross's shadow was about to engulf him entirely, he dashed out of the blurry "world" and felt his body.

He familiarly stimulated a descent, and Hood Eugen's long skinny face and messy blond hair instantly appeared in his vision, along with the three candles that were burning at the window ledge.

He had managed to get out of the mediumship state in time!

In that instant, he saw black scales growing one after another on Hood Eugen's face. His vacant pupils turned into slits, becoming extremely cool and ruthless.

Oh shit! He's going to lose control! Klein's pupils constricted, and before he could react, he saw a figure in a knee-length black windbreaker and silk top hat take two huge strides before Hood Eugen. He then raised the revolver and pushed it against the man's head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dunn Smith fired five bullets consecutively. Hood Eugen's head suddenly blew up like a watermelon falling down from a high height. The red and white rainstorm splattered across each and every corner of the room.

He had taken care of Hood Eugen before he lost control completely!

Klein, who was fifty centimeters away, was covered in blood and dirt. He looked at Dunn Smith in a daze, only having the feeling that the Captain was very handsome at that moment.

As long as you ignore his memory problems, the Captain is very trustworthy… He complimented sincerely from the bottom of his heart.

"Did an accident happen?" Dunn put away his revolver and watched Hood Eugen's mostly headless body slowly fall to the floor.

Just as Klein was about to organize his words, he saw that the body had become a pile of bloody flesh within a few seconds and the asylum uniform that covered it appeared to have its most basic structure damaged.

Hood Eugen's corpse was left with very few complete items. There were dozens of scales twinkling with a black shimmer, and his heart that had turned crystalline and faint blue.

The heart had a magical luster, like a diamond refracting incoming light.

It could calm someone down or make them restless. It could create tension or develop chaos. But other than that, there was nothing notable.

"This item should be controllable." After Dunn holstered his revolver, he took out a black glove and wore it on his right hand. He then squatted down to pick up the crystalline heart.

A controllable item… According to what the Captain previously mentioned, it could be used as the main ingredient for the formula of a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist… But, would it lead to the advanced Beyonder losing control even more easily? Klein took out his handkerchief to wipe the blood from his face and body. He then picked up his specially made tarot cards and cleaned their surfaces.

He looked at the ground and asked curiously, "What kind of items would these black scales be considered as?"

"These are ingredients that are contaminated with Beyonder power. They could be made into items that have long-lasting effects. For example, our demon hunting bullets' ability to injure dead spirits or monsters would decrease drastically as soon as they pass the three months mark, leaving only a tiny portion of demon-hunting characteristics in the remnant materials. If the materials used were something like the black scales, the effective period would be as long as a year or two, and the effects would be even better. Of course, due to their characteristics, the black scales are obviously not suitable to be made into demon hunting bullets," Dunn explained as he took a piece of paper from Klein to wrap the blue heart and black scales.

"It's just like the materials we use as supplementary ingredients for the potions?" Klein asked.

Dunn stood back up and nodded slightly.

"Yes."

*Someone who loses control will really become a monster… *Klein sighed. He seized the opportunity while the room was still sealed with a wall of spirituality and quickly described his encounter in Eugen's mind.

"When I was communicating with Hood Eugen's spirit, I saw a figure like the True Creator in his mind. But it was different from the mainstream ones. It wasn't the chain-bound Hanged Giant, nor was it the Eye behind the Shadow Curtains. Instead, it was similar to the one you saw in Hanass Vincent's dream."

Hanass Vincent was a member of the Aurora Order. As Melissa's friend, Selene, had peeked at his incantations and completed the magic mirror divination, it led to the Nighthawks' investigation of him.

Dunn Smith saw something close to the True Creator in his dream, but it was a different image than the mainstream image that was widely circulated. In the end, the result was an injury and a strange death.

When Hood Eugen flipped over the tarot card of The Hanged Man, Klein had actually already expected it. But he never thought it would be presented in such a way. Of course, it was only indirect contact. It wouldn't be comparable to the time he had spied on the Eternal Blazing Sun directly. The worst outcome was just mild injury or mild corruption.

As he listened to Klein's description, Dunn's expression became solemn.

He knitted his eyebrows and said with a deep voice, "A huge cross, black nails, a naked man covered in blood hanging upside down?"

"I didn't see it clearly. That's also the reason why I'm not injured. I only noticed a huge cross and figure similar to a man being hung upside down," Klein replied tactfully.

At that moment, all he cared about was "fleeing"…

Seemingly in thought, Dunn nodded and said, "Lanevus's visit to Hood Eugen was related to the True Creator? So the Aurora Order is involved?"

Klein quickly repeated the conversation he'd had during the communication.

"Lanevus tempted Hood Eugen with the 'acting method,' and a so-called immortal godhood. But I don't understand why he said that it was the worst of times, and also the best of times. Perhaps it was just the way he speaks as a Swindler?

"… The help Hood Eugen provided involved a sinister and dark altar… I suspect that Lanevus is plotting something terrifying…"

Then, his heart stirred as he spoke.

"Captain, do you remember the letter written to Mr. Z? The letter that the member from the Aurora Order whom I killed carried!

"He mentioned in the letter that he was waiting for an appropriate opportunity, something about the arrival of the end of days, he will offer all the lambs in Tingen to his so-called God. Would this be related to Lanevus's plot?

"Could Lanevus be the Mr. Z from the Aurora Order?"

Dunn Smith thought carefully and said, "I don't think so. Lanevus couldn't be Mr. Z. Otherwise, he wouldn't be setting up a fake steelworks company to scam people while the Aurora Order was up to something. It would introduce too many variables in his main mission. If anything went wrong with the scam, he would draw the attention of the police and us. He would have to run away from Tingen and abandon his plan.

"Of course, if he was just insane, it would be perfectly normal for him to act illogically.

"But judging from the scam he set up, the calmness and cunningness with which he swept away the money doesn't make him look like a real lunatic.

"So, I don't think he's Mr. Z from the Aurora Order. Of course, he might really be involved in the matter as mentioned in the letter. The one offering all the lambs in Tingen to the so-called God."

Upon saying that, Dunn paused, then paced back and forth as he said, "This incident might have quite severe repercussions. We have to reinvestigate Lanevus and get some clues. Hmm, let's clean up the scene and cover up any evidence here. Let everyone know that Hood Eugen died but leave no clue as to who killed him. This should lead to action by the Psychology Alchemists or other Beyonders that are paying attention to the asylum. They might know something.

"The Lanevus scam is either still in the hands of the police department or transferred to the Mandated Punishers. We'll join the investigations by saying that we obtained clues while investigating the Aurora Order. Then, we'll work together with the Mandated Punishers and the Machinery Hivemind. We'll concentrate the forces in Tingen and investigate everything and anyone associated with Lanevus. We can request assistance from Backlund diocese and the Holy Cathedral if it's necessary!"

After that, Dunn turned his head sideways to look at Klein. He ruminated and said, "Do you have anything that you'd like to add?"

Captain, you basically said it all… Klein shook his head solemnly. "No!"

He hurriedly used ritualistic magic to remove some of the necessary traces with the aid of the simple altar that he had yet to clear in order to ensure that no one would be able to tell that they were the ones who killed Hood Eugen.

Then, he put away his ingredients, blew out the candles, removed the wall of spirituality, and left the ward in silence with Dunn Smith. They left the asylum by climbing over its walls.

"Go back and rest." Dunn stood at a corner without a street lamp. He pressed his black silk hat and said, "there are many things that can only be done tomorrow."

"Alright." Klein wasn't a Sleepless who only slept two to three hours a day. He immediately bade farewell to the Captain and took the Nighthawks' dedicated carriage that was waiting nearby and returned to Daffodil Street.

Before he entered the carriage, he turned back to take a glance. He saw the Captain still standing in the dark which even the moonlight couldn't touch. He appeared to be thinking in silence.

The streets were quiet and void of people before dawn. The carriage tore through the streets, sometimes going straight, sometimes taking turns.

Klein was pondering about Lanevus when suddenly, he felt as if he was in a trance.

He saw that the color before his eyes become saturated. The reds became redder and the blacks became blacker, just like an impressionist's oil painting.

The surroundings slowed down, and the carriage seemed to enter a strange world.

Klein grabbed his Flaring Sun Charm and drew his revolver.

Just then, a huge, white, bony palm extended through the carriage window and threw in a neatly folded letter.

Then, the palm pulled back and vanished. The oil painting-like scene suddenly returned to normal while the carriage was still driving along the street steadily.

… *It's a really well-hidden method…* Klein looked at the letter, by the side of his foot, as the corner of his lips twitched.

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CHAPTER 187
AZIK'S WARNING

The actions of the messenger shocked Klein for a full five seconds before he recovered. He bent over and picked up the letter.

"Even if Mr. Azik is unable to use a good portion of his abilities as a Beyonder, because of his memory loss, being able to send out such a messenger should make him powerful enough to deal with a Sequence 7 or 6 Beyonder." His heart reflected his shocked and envious expression. He didn't unfold the letter immediately. Instead, he placed the letter into his pocket, together with the Slumber Charms.

The carriage continued forward. When Klein exited the carriage at Daffodil Street, he instinctively looked at the driver, Cesare, only to see his relaxed smile, as if he hadn't noticed anything unusual that had happened.

Klein nodded and returned home after observing Cesare with his Spirit Vision.

He looked at the balcony and pipes on the second floor and pondered for a few seconds. He decided to maintain his gentlemanly behavior and not attempt to scale the pipe back into his room. As for his stained clothes, he would take them to the Blackthorn Security Company tomorrow and get a professional to wash them through the police department. That would prevent his clothes from shocking his maid Bella and his sister Melissa.

Klein had removed the reverse lock on the front door before he leaped out the window from the second floor. Now, he took advantage of the fact that it was late at night and quietly opened the door to his house, deftly making his way in.

After closing and locking the main door, he heaved a sigh of relief. He went up to the second floor with hushed footsteps.

Stopping before his locked bedroom, Klein took out a tarot card calmly. He inserted it into the slit of the door and lightly pulled, easily breaking the specialized lock he designed himself.

He then entered the room, locked the door, and removed his clothes, before he fully relaxed.

It sure feels like being a thief… Klein laughed as he shook his head. He calmly took out his revolver and placed it under the pillow.

After he was finished with all of that, he lit up the gas lamp and sat in front of his desk. He took out the letter and began reading seriously.

"I'm sorry for replying only now. I've been busy searching for traces of my past. I've also been meeting up with former teachers and students and those drag on late into the night.

"I finally understand the encounters that I've had over the past two days after reading your letter. The police searched every room in the hotel that I'm staying at. There was a person who secretly snooped around in the hotel at night. Yes, I'm talking about a person with Beyonder powers.

"… So Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, who's a frequent character in novels and newspapers, has infiltrated Backlund and has gone on quite a killing spree. I remember that he's not only wanted by the Loen Kingdom, he's also on the bounty list of the Feysac Empire, the Intis Republic, the Feynapotter Kingdom…"

So, how much is the bounty? Klein subconsciously wondered.

He didn't get an answer because Azik had switched to mentioning something else.

"I find the abilities of a Shepherd that you described quite familiar, it's as if I've seen it somewhere, but I cannot remember where. It must be an encounter from one of my past lives. Not being able to recall it makes me very frustrated."

Eh, Mr. Azik is a little interested in the Shepherd. I can use this to get him to help me. Yes, this sure is coincidental… No, this is not a coincidence, but inevitable!

It can be inferred that Mr. Azik has lived for over a thousand years and is most likely a High-Sequence Beyonder. Then, he would most likely have encountered the powers of many different Beyonders in his earlier lives. He would also have deeper impressions of those that were more unique… In other words, it isn't only the Shepherd that would give him feelings of familiarity, but jobs such as the Unshadowed, Demon Hunter, or Guardian that would do so as well…

It's highly likely that Mr. Azik would find any mystical item that corresponds to a particular Sequence's abilities familiar and have his interest piqued. That's something that can be imagined…

Klein was doubtful at first before being enlightened. He was a lot more certain as a result.

He shifted his gaze and continued to read the letter.

"I've long recalled some parts of the sacrificial ritual you asked about, probably because I have a deeper impression of them. Perhaps I was a priest in my one of my more recent lifetimes.

"I have to remind you and warn you, that you have to be very cautious when using sacrificial rituals. You cannot entrust your safety to evil gods or hidden, mysterious existences. They do not have consciences like we do.

"Also, you have to possess a strong sense of right and wrong, for the evil gods and devils often create seemingly harmless identities for themselves.

My opinion is that you cannot sacrifice something whose presence you are not fully aware of; otherwise, your soul could end up being the sacrificial item."

*In simple terms, evil gods and devils will take on another form, disguising themselves as someone trustworthy… Just like on the Internet, an account that claims to be a seemingly adorable chick might be controlled by a huge bloke… He had to be cautious even if they were to meet offline after confirming the person's looks, as the person might just be cross-dresser… *Klein didn't disregard Azik's warning just because he was conducting the sacrificial ritual for himself. He nodded in approval.

After Azik emphasized a few things he had to look out for, he quickly explained the sacrificial ritual he knew of.

"First, set up the ritual. Choose the symbols based on which deity or unorthodox mysterious existence you are going to offer a sacrifice to. Use the corresponding herbs and minerals of 'His' or 'Her' domain. Of course, you can also make them into holy oils, ointments, scents, and other items in advance."

Symbols? Klein froze for a moment. He realized that he—The Fool that didn't belong to this era—didn't know what his corresponding symbol was…

He thought for a moment, quickly recalling the complex symbol on the back of his chair at the ancient bronze table. It was made up of a Pupil-less Eye which represented secrecy, and the partial contorted lines which represented change.

That should be my symbol, or more accurately, that is what symbolizes me in the world above the gray fog. My domain is much simpler then—secrecy, change, good luck… But I cannot be too sure of that, so I'll have to try it out… Even if the symbol is wrong, as long as I get my honorary name right, the target of the sacrifice wouldn't point towards some other entity. The worst thing that could happen is that the ritual would fail. Of that, I'm

certain… Klein thought as he rubbed the surface of the paper as he formulated a plan in his heart.

His eyes focused on the letter once again, reading the rest of the letter.

"Second, you need to be clear if the sacrifice needs to happen at a specific time. Then, follow the processes of a normal ritual, until you finish reciting the honorable names and incantations of the ritual.

"You must remember to use either Jotun, Dragonese, Elvish, or ancient Hermes. You must use the natural powers in these languages to establish a direct connection with the corresponding entity. You can design the exact incantations to use, but it must include these critical terms: 'pray,' 'notice,' 'offer,' 'kingdom,' 'gates,' and 'open.'

"Finally, you must use materials that have a certain spirituality quality to create a connection with the natural powers of the incantation. This will allow you to construct a tunnel that connects to the gates of the kingdom where the corresponding entity resides. If the entity is interested, then your sacrifice is complete.

"This step isn't absolutely necessary. If you can make the corresponding entity very interested in your sacrifice, then 'He' will open the gates to 'His' kingdom for you after you finish reciting the incantations, establishing a stable tunnel on 'His' own accord. Of course, this would often imply danger as the orthodox result as relatively friendly hidden gods rarely do this. Only evil gods or devils would reply to you directly in order to achieve their goals."

Materials that have spirituality are not cheap… I wonder if merely reciting the incantations would allow me to open a sacrificial tunnel similar to the Door of Summoning? I wonder if I could make use of the abilities of the world above the gray fog… Yes, I'll try that first and only get the materials with spirituality from the underground market if I fail. Do I need Beyonder ingredients? It should be fine if it possesses a certain amount of spirituality, right? Klein thought about the 300 pounds lying around in his anonymous

account. He also thought about the 10 plus pounds of savings that he had saved up.

Beyonder materials were not completely identical to materials that possessed spirituality. For example, the heart that Hood Eugen left behind was a Beyonder ingredient while the black scales were a material possessing certain amounts of spirituality.

After he finished reading Mr. Azik's letter, Klein rubbed his fingers together and ignited a flame of spirituality. He burned the paper to ash and threw it into the rubbish bin.

It was already deep into the night and Klein was in no hurry to try the ritual. He intended to first make a plan and go through everything that he needed to take note of before putting it into practice.

He had a vague understanding of his shortcomings long ago. He was cautious and rational when it came to things he made plans for, but once the events deviated from his original plans, he would easily consider only the good and disregard the bad when he was forced to be on his toes.

A simpler description would be that a rash action of his would easily cause him to court death… Klein extended his palm to cover his face.

The next day, Dunn Smith, who had communicated with the Mandated Punishers and Machinery Hivemind, started to assign missions. Klein also received his assignment. He was tasked to investigate a number of people who had connections to Lanevus. But because of his suggestion and the policy of the Nighthawks, he didn't have to be responsible for the people he had met previously.

Of course, Klein continued with his combat lessons in the afternoon. Nor did Dunn assign him the role of lead investigator.

…

Backlund, Hillston Backlund. In a building with a horse stable and garden.

Qilangos, who had a unique wide chin and dark green eyes, looked at the unconscious man before him. He took off the man's clothes and wore them.

He then leisurely walked in front of the dressing mirror and saw the black glove on his left hand twitch. He saw many contorted lines appearing on its back.

A few seconds later, Qilangos saw a thin veil of light envelop his figure. His muscles, skin, and bones began undergoing a strange transformation.

Sometime later, he transformed into the unconscious man, completely identical in height, appearance, and demeanor!

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CHAPTER 188
BALL

Sharp nose, thin eyebrows, slightly droopy cheeks, faint blue eyes… Qilangos examined himself in the mirror. He was certain that he looked no different from the unconscious man.

After he rehearsed a few of the man's gestures, he bent down to drag the man off the ground and shoved him into a wardrobe.

Then, he extended his right hand. With an audible snap, he broke the man's neck.

Qilangos took out his handkerchief and wiped his hands before closing the wardrobe door.

He slowly walked back to the mirror, wore a black double-breasted suit, tied a bowtie, and raised a bottle of amber-colored cologne. He dripped a few drops on his wrist, then dabbed them over himself.

Qilangos tidied his hair in front of the mirror, then walked out of the room. He clasped his hands and told his butler who was waiting outside, "Don't let anyone enter my room; I'm keeping something very important in there."

"Yes, Baron!" The balding butler pressed his hand against his chest and bowed. "Your carriage and personal servant is waiting downstairs. Duke Negan's invitation card is there as well."

Maintaining the baron's mannerisms, Qilangos nodded indiscernibly. He walked towards the stairs in an arrogant manner under the company of his butler.

Heh, a baron who is riddled in debt, to the point of not wanting to hire a normal security guard, has actually maintained his hiring of a butler, personal male servant, two attendants, two first-grade maidservants, four second-grade maidservants, two laundry female workers, one carriage driver, one stablemaster, one gardener, one chef, and one sous chef. To these foolish nobles, dignity really is everything… I even had to waste some of my time to learn the strange pronunciations and so-called "noble slang"… Qilangos thought to himself in disdain.

…

Backlund, Cherwood Backlund. In a particular cramped apartment.

Xio Derecha sat cross-legged on a bed and looked at Fors Wall who was reading a novel with the light from the window.

"This is so disappointing. Qilangos didn't leave any clues behind. We still haven't figured out what he's trying to do in Backlund."

They had acted according to their initial plan and lodged a police report. Then, they secretly sent a letter to the local police station and described the strange situation at the crime scene in detail. They also mentioned that the suspect could be Qilangos.

The police station responded as they had predicted. The policemen were very careful, and they transferred the case directly to the Mandated Punishers.

After a day's time, the news that Rear Admiral Hurricane had sneaked into Backlund was widely spread among all "enforcement teams." Xio and Fors also left the place they originally rented and hid to investigate in secret.

They didn't want to be brought back to the police station to help with the official investigation. The Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, and Machinery Hivemind were all hostile towards non-official Beyonders. The Churches viewed them as potential criminals.

Hence, not only were Xio and Fors avoiding the possibility of Qilangos's pursuit, but they were also hiding from the "enforcement" authorities.

"If we could discover his purpose so easily, Qilangos would've been buried in a cemetery long ago, and the tombstone would be covered in weeds," Fors replied casually. "We need to wait patiently. As long as the authorities continue to take this much interest in him, Qilangos will definitely make a mistake. I've got to say, I'm quite envious of a mystical item that can allow one to change appearances."

Xio hugged her knees and looked out the window.

"I'm just worried that Qilangos will take action soon and then flee from Backlund before anyone can respond.

"If that happens, I don't know when I'll be able to advance to Sequence 8, let alone Sequence 6 or Sequence 5…"

She paused and muttered as her mind spaced out, "I don't know when I'll be able to take back the things that belonged to our family… It's been almost a year since I last saw my younger brother…"

Fors gave her a comforting smile.

"When you fulfill your wishes, please allow me to write your experiences into a story. It would definitely be an interesting and exciting one."

"Hmm, I actually find Miss Audrey very generous. Even if Qilangos escapes, I think she'll still reward us handsomely. We've been busying ourselves for so long after all, and we've even caused Qilangos to appear."

"I hope so… Sigh, why can't I have any fortuitous encounters?" Xio grabbed her shoulder-length blonde hair.

Fors frowned and said, "In the Beyonder world, fortuitous encounters are usually accompanied with danger. I have yet to figure out what the ravings

we hear during the full moon mean, or if they will result in negative changes. Heh heh, fortuitous encounters without dangers may exist, but they are very, very rare. It's difficult for your wish to be fulfilled, unless… unless we receive the favors from an orthodox deity or the attention of some friendly hidden existence. However, it would be hard for us to tell if it was really an evil god or devil in disguise."

Xio sat straight and drew a crimson moon on her chest.

"May the Goddess watch over me!"

…

Duke Negan was in his mansion located in Backlund, Empress Borough, where he was hosting a grand ball.

There were two parts of the mansion. One was the dancing hall located on the ground floor, which was covered with glamorous stone slabs carved with complicated patterns. There was the duke's excellent ensemble playing music in a corner. Up the stairs, there was a winding corridor that circled the hall located on the second floor. The guests were holding their glasses, leaning against the railing, overlooking the people dancing on the ground floor as though they were enjoying a fencing match from the stands. Occasionally, a gentleman would walk before a lady or his wife to invite them to dance. If the invitation was accepted, both of them would walk down the stairs hand in hand and enter the hall.

On the far side of the corridor, there were doors after doors. They were rooms that had been allocated to the guests as their resting quarters.

But behind a French door was a corridor, and on both sides of the corridor were various gypsum statues. They were all the ancestors of the Negan family.

At the end of the corridor was another hall which could see the ball. Long tables were covered with a variety of delicious food and fine wine, and

another ensemble belonging to the duke was playing relaxing melodies for the guests.

In the hall, the guests were gathering in groups. Some were seated and some stood around, chatting about all kinds of matters. Those who wished to get away from the frivolities for a while would go to the attached balconies to overlook the garden and enjoy the crimson moon in the sky.

After participating in the opening dance, Audrey Hall stood on the second floor above the dancing hall and stared at the candles on the huge crystal chandeliers hanging from the rooftop in a daze. However, she noticed that many young men were appearing to pump themselves up to come over and invite her for a dance. So, she wisely left the place and went to the corridor that connected to the dining hall.

How boring, but my attendance is necessary… Sigh, can't they just let me observe in silence? I have to say, some people have rich facial expressions when they dance. They remind me of animals seeking mates… Audrey lowered her head, looked at the tips of her feet, and walked in a straight line out of boredom.

Just then, the corner of her eyes caught an approaching figure. She slowed down, stood straight, and instantly became the elegant yet quiet Miss Hall.

"Good day, Baron Gramir," Audrey greeted with a flawless smile and etiquette.

Baron Gramir had thin eyebrows and faint blue eyes. He smiled and bowed.

"Nice to meet you again, Miss Hall. You are the brightest and most dazzling gemstone at this ball."

After exchanging a few words, Baron Gramir headed for the dancing hall while Audrey continued approaching the dining hall.

After a few steps, she suddenly frowned. There was puzzlement in her green eyes.

Baron Gramir isn't the same as before…

In the past, when he sees a pretty lady or madam of a higher rank than he is, and one that's relatively prettier, he would look to the side without looking at them directly. Then, he would steal glances constantly… But today, he appears very confident…

Also, his cologne smells off. In the numerous parties in the past, his body would emit the final note of the Amber cologne fragrance, musky yet faint, not ostentatious yet elegant. In other words, he would spray the cologne a few hours earlier to let the front and middle notes disperse before the gathering. But just now, his cologne was Amber in middle note, rich and refined…

Audrey slowed down her footsteps. As a Spectator who had completely digested her potion, her sensitivity towards details wasn't anything other Beyonders could compare to.

Suddenly, she thought of a possibility. Her green crystal-clear eyes froze.

It couldn't be Qilangos in a disguise, right?

The Creeping Hunger has the power to change a person's appearance!

…

The more Audrey thought about it, the more possible it seemed. She felt uptight as she turned nervous and panicky.

If he really was Rear Admiral Hurricane, what is he trying to do? It's a pity that I can't bring Susie to the ball. Otherwise, I could ask her to observe Baron Gramir… No way, I have to warn Father! Amidst her frantic

thoughts, Audrey quickened her pace and entered the dining hall. She found Count Hall who was talking to the Chief Cabinet Secretary and others.

She flashed a flawless smile and walked over. She held Count Hall by his arm and told the others, "Gentlemen, do you mind if I borrow Count Hall for a few minutes?"

"Beautiful lady, it's your right," The few gentlemen said in a friendly response.

Audrey held Count Hall by his arm and moved to the nearest balcony. They found a quiet, uninhabited corner, and she said to her middle-aged father who was getting plump, "Father, I have something to tell you."

Count Hall was smiling fondly at his daughter, but he got serious when he saw her serious facial expression, "What's the matter?"

"I ran into Baron Gramir earlier, but there are things about him that are different from the past. For instance, his cologne was in the middle note of the Amber fragrance. It used to be the end note. And…" Audrey continued with the things that she found different. It could be explained as being sensitive and meticulous.

After she described what she had noticed, she weighed her words and added, "I heard from Viscount Glaint that Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos has the ability to take on other people's appearance. Hasn't he been in Backlund recently?"

Count Hall listened to her carefully, and his face grew abnormally grave.

But he soon flashed a smile and comforted his anxious daughter.

"I'll take care of this. Go look for your mother and stay with her. She's at the lounge in this hall."

"Okay." Audrey nodded obediently.

On the way back to the lounge, she turned around and looked at her father. She saw that Count Hall was talking to another noble softly, and he wore a rather solemn look.

Audrey couldn't help but feel anxious. She felt that she needed to do something to make sure that her father, mother, and brother didn't get hurt.

She surveyed the area and changed the direction in which she was heading in. She left the dining hall and found Duke Negan's small prayer room.

She pushed the door closed and locked it behind her. She looked at the symbol of the Lord of Storms before her and subconsciously found a remote and dark corner.

Audrey sat down with her body leaning forward. She clasped her hands together into a praying position and supported her forehead.

Then, she recited softly in Hermes, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

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CHAPTER 189
PRAYERS AND REPLIES

Tingen City, Daffodil Street.

Klein was discussing the latest play with Benson and Melissa and was inviting them to watch it at the theater next weekend.

"I think the newspapers have said enough about it. 'The Return of the Count' is definitely a play that's worth watching. It's already been performed more than ten times in Backlund, and it sold out each time. I think that we shouldn't miss this opportunity." Klein, who had lacked sources of entertainment, was unwilling to give up. After all, he had been an ardent follower of television shows back on Earth.

Of course, if it wasn't for the maintenance of my image, I'd rather go to a bar and play billiards… Yes, renting a venue for tennis isn't a bad choice. That can be considered as it's a leisure sport for the middle class. With my current fitness, as long as I don't encounter other Beyonders, I should be able to handle most opponents easily… Forget it, it can only be a passing thought for now. I still have to reinvestigate the figures associated with Lanevus in the morning, go for combat training in the afternoon, and search for the house with the red chimney in the evening before returning home…

I sure am a busy man… Klein tried to remain optimistic.

Noticing that Benson was inclined towards his suggestion while Melissa was still a little hesitant, Klein smiled as he added, "I heard that the most popular supporting cast in 'The Return of the Count' is a genius mechanic."

"Alright, we do have to see a play at a large theater once in our lives." Melissa pouted and nodded her head grudgingly, but there was now a sparkle in her eyes.

Klein was about to respond when he heard a buzzing in his ears. He became dizzy for a few seconds.

Someone is praying to me… He supported his back with his right hand and chuckled.

"Then I shall wait patiently for the tickets to go on sale."

"Alright, I'll be returning to my bedroom to write up a report."

"We also have to plunge into the sea of knowledge and hope that we don't drown." Benson let out a self-deprecating laugh as he returned to the dining room with Melissa.

Klein went to the second floor and locked the door to his room. He sealed the room with a wall of spirituality, then he took four steps counterclockwise as he recited the incantations, returning to the world above the gray fog.

His figure suddenly appeared at the seat of honor in the magnificent palace fit for a giant. A pulsing crimson star reflected in his eyes.

Klein lifted his right hand and extended his spirituality, establishing a connection with the star representing Justice.

With a boom, he saw a blurred, distorted image. He saw Miss Justice in a long beige regal dress sitting on a chair in a dark corner. Her head was bowed, her hands clasped.

At the same time, her still nascent and nervous voice stacked in an illusory manner, reverberating around the space, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I pray for your attention.

"I pray for you to listen."

…

"I'm at a ball held by Duke Negan and encountered someone who's suspected to be Qilangos.

"He is disguising himself as Baron Gramir, and his motives are unclear.

"I noticed today that some of the details regarding Baron Gramir were a little different than usual. This made me recall the appearance-altering Beyonder power that Qilangos's mystical item has."

…

Klein listened seriously and carefully interpreted what was happening. Finally, he understood what Miss Justice was describing.

Qilangos has actually used the special powers of Creeping Hunger to infiltrate Duke Negan's ball!

But Qilangos probably didn't expect that one of the ladies at the ball is a Spectator, a Spectator who has committed the mannerisms of Baron Gramir to memory! Hence, he doesn't realize that he's been exposed!

What does Qilangos want? And what should I do? I've tried conducting the sacrificial ritual without spirituality-infused materials over the past two days and realized that I can create something like the Door of Summoning, but I'm unable to open it. I was going to find some time to purchase some materials with spirituality in the underground market to prepare for my

second experiment. Miss Justice definitely wouldn't have spirituality-infused materials when she's attending a ball… Klein thought for more than ten seconds before beginning his response to Justice's prayer.

…

In a small prayer room in Duke Negan's mansion.

Audrey repeated her prayers a few times before finally stopping. She tidied her clothes and walked quickly to the door.

She knew that she couldn't be gone for too long because her parents would worry about her and thus misjudge the situation. It would cause them to react in the wrong way.

Standing behind the door, Audrey took a deep breath, extended her right hand which was covered in a white veiled glove, and released the lock with a wary heart.

After leaving the small prayer room, she followed the path back to the dining hall. She saw the figures holding wine glasses and plates get closer when her vision suddenly turned blurry. She realized that an illusory fog was spreading into the surroundings.

In the middle of the thick wide fog was an ancient chair, and atop the chair was a mysterious presence, a mysterious presence that seemed to overlook everything.

*Mr. Fool! *Audrey almost shouted in pleasant surprise.

She then heard a deep, familiar voice: "I'm aware."

The voice reverberated around the space as the fog vanished. Audrey's vision was still filled with images of the long tables of food and wine, as well as the bustling sights of interacting guests.

The worry and unease in her heart vanished as she subconsciously straightened her back and entered the dining hall with light steps. She walked toward the recreation room in the dining hall.

…

In the magnificent palace in the world of fog.

Klein started to think about how to convey the message to The Hanged Man after finishing his reply to Miss Justice.

I cannot just repeat the description to him since it undermines my authority… After all, what mysterious existence would personally take on the role of a messenger!? He deliberated for nearly a minute before an idea came to him. He conjured the scene of Miss Justice praying and transformed it into something akin to a movie scene with the faces mosaicked and censored.

He then extended his hand and tapped, launching the scene into the crimson star representing The Hanged Man.

…

Backlund, Cherwood Backlund. At the Holy Wind Cathedral.

The Hanged Man, Alger Wilson, was going through the investigation reports in a simple room, trying to find traces of Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

Near his right hand was a stack of paper filled with many contorted symbols.

Just as Alger was leaning back in his chair and rubbing his eyes, he saw his field of vision turn blurry. His line of sight was filled with thick, gray fog.

There was an ancient chair which seemed to exist eternally, deep within the endless fog. Atop the chair was a faint human figure.

Mr. Fool… Just as this thought came to Alger, he saw that another hazy figure in a regal dress within the grayish-white fog.

She was in a praying position, repeating, "I'm at a ball held by Duke Negan and encountered someone who's suspected to be Qilangos.

"He is disguising himself as Baron Gramir, and his motives are unclear.

"I noticed today that some of the details regarding Baron Gramir were a little different than usual. This made me recall the appearance-altering Beyonder power that Qilangos's mystical item has."

…

Alger was shocked at first, then let out a look of pleasant surprise. He pressed his palm against his chest and lowered his head, "Praise you, Mr. Fool!"

Everything he saw or heard vanished before he finished his sentence as if nothing had happened.

Staring at the desk strewn with Emperor Roselle's diary pages and his investigation reports, Alger's pupils constricted as he realized how powerful The Fool was once again.

This was the Holy Wind Cathedral—once the headquarters of the Church of the Lord of Storms. Even though that was history from more than a thousand years ago, many believers still viewed this place as sacred. But Mr. Fool could still descend upon this space without warning and give a reply…

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Alger gathered his stuff and exited the room.

He was going to look for one of the Cardinals of the Church of the Lord of Storms, the Archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake!

For Alger Wilson, being able to kill Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos personally was the best course of action, but if he was unable to do that, guaranteeing that he was really dead was also acceptable in his book!

…

After forwarding Miss Justice's description to The Hanged Man, Klein left the mysterious world above the gray fog and returned to his bedroom.

While he was in no hurry to dispel the wall of spirituality, he sat before his desk and took out a piece of paper. He picked up a pen and began his letter.

"According to an urgent indication from a source, Qilangos has used the abilities of a Shepherd to take on the appearance of Baron Gramir and has infiltrated Duke Negan's ball. His motives are unclear as of this moment."

Klein wasn't worried that Mr. Azik would be suspicious of him or doubt why someone in Tingen would be so quick to know something that just happened in Backlund, for the telegraph existed in this world.

"I don't know if you would be interested in this, but I thought that I should let you know." Klein quickly ended the letter and folded the piece of paper.

He then found the ancient copper whistle, brought it to his mouth, and gave it a hard blow.

The gigantic, terrifying, and illusory skeleton messenger appeared once again, still standing at its original spot, not minding that its head was going through the ceiling.

Klein fought back the urge to use the abilities of the Clown to turn the letter into a flying dagger. He tossed the letter towards the messenger without a

fuss.

He then blew on the copper whistle once again to end the summoning. Klein collected himself and went through the events in his head once again.

This was all he could do for the time being!

Although Klein could also make use of the summoning ritual and bring the Flaring Sun Charm directly to Backlund, it was too dangerous for him to do so. First, Qilangos was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed and had with him the Creeping Hunger. Second, it was too troublesome. He had to first bring the Flaring Sun Charm to the world above the gray fog. Third, his image would be affected. Thus, he wisely gave up on this idea.

To be honest, the problem is not too serious. Duke Negan is the most influential noble outside of the royal family, a key member behind the Conservative Party. There will be many high ranking nobles attending the ball today. I have no doubt that there are Beyonders guarding the area. If not for this consideration, there would have been no need for him to infiltrate the place under a disguise… Since Miss Justice noticed him early, the nobles should be prepared. This incident shouldn't blow out of control…

I wonder how fast Mr. Azik's messenger is? If it travels through the spirit world, Mr. Azik could still likely make it in time for the "main course," but if it's as slow as Madam Daly's messenger, then he might only read about the incident in tomorrow's paper…

Klein nodded indiscernibly and tossed this incident to the back of his head. After all, there was nothing more that he could do.

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CHAPTER 190
THE ASSORTMENT OF ABILITIES

In Duke Negan's mansion, in the dancing hall.

Disguised as Baron Gramir, Qilangos held a glass of blood-red Aurmir grape wine and casually stood behind the railing on the winding corridor on the second floor. He overlooked the people on the dance floor and enjoyed the view of the glamorously dressed ladies.

However, there was no lust in his eyes; they were as calm as a frozen lake. From the corner of his eyes, he stole glances at the hanging chandelier and the nearby Duke Negan who was looking at the beautiful figures passing by.

The Duke was wearing a well-ironed navy uniform with red ribbons attached to the medals on his shoulders. He preferred to wear his military uniform on formal occasions, in remembrance of his decades of illustrious service while in the military.

However, he had put on much weight since then. His once-sharp gray eyes had been left turbid and filled with desire. However, he took good care of himself, as the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, lips, and forehead were faint, and his black hair was still thick and luxuriant.

That was Pallas Negan, the current Duke Negan, the main supporter of the Conservative Party, the brother of Prime Minister Aguesid, one of the richest and most powerful men in the Loen Kingdom.

At the same time, he was also the reason why Qilangos had sneaked into Backlund!

*The thought of assassinating such an important figure makes me shiver in excitement… *Qilangos retracted his gaze and closed his eyes.

He was willing to accept the commission because he had been offered a sufficiently attractive price, and it was also because Qilangos loved adventure and enjoyed taking on difficult challenges.

If this assassination is successful, my fame will spread across the Northern and Southern Continents, placing me above the Four Kings. And I'll receive a card, a card which contains the mystery of God that the Emperor Roselle created! Qilangos suppressed his excitement and lowered his head to examine his left hand.

Creeping Hunger had become transparent. It was impossible to tell that "Baron Gramir" was wearing a glove via the naked eye or through contact.

This is such a magical item… If it wasn't for this, a Sequence 6 like me wouldn't have achieved the rank of Pirate Admiral… Thoughts flashed through his mind as bouts of regret surged within Qilangos.

In his years as a pirate, he had seen and interacted with many Beyonders. Among them were members of the Aurora Order who enjoyed adventuring at the ends of the Sonia Sea.

So, he knew that Creeping Hunger was still rather different from a real Shepherd.

Firstly, the speed of switching states was too slow. It required at least a second, but a real Shepherd could switch instantly. Secondly, the controlled soul could only use one to three abilities before the person died. As for what abilities could be used and how powerful they were, that all depended on luck. On the other hand, a real Shepherd could decide on the three abilities. They didn't have to gamble like they were at a casino. Lastly, Creeping

Hunger could only have five souls at the same time, while a real Shepherd could have seven.

Of course, both had the same restriction, which was that they could only control one soul at a time, and they could only use the soul's corresponding Beyonder powers and their own Beyonder powers. If they wanted to replace one of the souls with a new soul, the procedure would be irreversible.

Qilangos went through seven or eight years of adjustment and finally settled with five souls. Their abilities complemented one another and made their owner very terrifying.

Because of the constant adjustments and experimentation that he did over the years, there were rumors among the pirates that claimed that Rear Admiral Hurricane was omnipotent.

During the ardent dance music, Qilangos rehearsed the subsequent actions he would take in his mind. He sighed with regret in his heart.

It's a pity that I didn't find the Traveler over the past few days. Otherwise, I wouldn't have to worry about anything tonight.

If he had captured the woman that was most likely a Traveler, Qilangos wouldn't have hesitated to feed one of the five souls that he was grazing to the Creeping Hunger.

To him, a Traveler's ability would be invaluable!

Qilangos stole a glance at the huge crystal chandelier hanging from the rooftop and decided to wait no longer.

The soul that he controlled currently had only one ability, which was to change his appearance. But it didn't possess any power to fight against other Beyonders. However, the transformation ability was still very useful, and Qilangos hadn't been willing to replace it with something else all this time.

The good thing was that no matter which soul he controlled, Qilangos could use his Wind-blessed Beyonder powers at the same time.

Finally, he acted as though his gaze was locking onto the curvy figure of a noble's wife before he swept it towards Duke Negan and all the gentlemen around him.

Duke Negan is a staunch follower of the Lord of Storms, and he is a key figure in the influence the Church of the Lord of Storms has on politics. There must be a Beyonder from the Church of the Lord of Storms beside him who's protecting him. Although the Negan family isn't an ancient thousand-year-old family, he's one of the wealthiest and powerful men in the kingdom. He's definitely searched for Sequence potion formulas in secret or hired Beyonders… Qilangos's thoughts surged. He mentally eliminated gentlemen who were nobles and officers before locking his eyes on the man who was constantly beside Duke Negan.

The man was brown-haired, blue-eyed, and wearing a black tuxedo. He was almost expressionless while he remained vigilant of his surroundings constantly.

Qilangos nodded indiscernibly and pressed his right hand forward slightly.

Whoosh!

A sudden gust of wind swept in the area above the dance floor, extinguishing the chandelier's candles.

At the moment between light and darkness, while everyone's attention was drawn away, a few wind blades slashed at the same spot on a metal chain supporting the crystal chandelier guised among the gusts of wind.

Creak!

With a harsh, shattering noise, the huge crystal chandelier plummeted straight to the dance floor. It made a loud crash, and people screamed in

surprise. Shards of debris flew, cutting guests and leaving them screaming in pain and fear.

The darkened hall was suddenly full of opportunities. Qilangos's glove squirmed and changed, condensing into a golden surface.

His expression was imposing and his eyes saw through the darkness as he fixed his gaze onto the man next to Duke Negan.

Suddenly, Qilangos's eyes shone like lightning.

The Beyonder who was in charge of protecting Duke Negan suddenly let out a tragic scream and fell on the ground holding his head. He rolled around and struggled.

With a swoosh, Qilangos's figure dashed through the darkness and charged at Duke Negan.

However, in the deep recesses of his eyes, it reflected his target who didn't show any signs of panic. It was of utmost confidence.

Duke Negan's plump figure stood erect on the spot and observed the incoming assassin as if he were looking down on him.

He lifted his right hand and pushed forward. He murmured in ancient Hermes, "Imprison!"

In silence, Qilangos suddenly stopped. He was suddenly surrounded by a transparent wall, something that wrapped around him like a sticky liquid.

It made him seem like an insect in amber, or a prisoner in prison.

The leader of the Conservative Party nobles, the hereditary Duke Pallas Negan was a Beyonder himself—a very strong Beyonder!

Duke Negan spoke in a low voice again and waved his right hand.

"Flog!"

Pa! Pa!

Qilangos seemed to be whipped by a shapeless whip. His clothing tore from the whipping as his skin was lacerated, revealing white bone.

Then, Duke Negan leaned forward and held his right first. He declared in an imposing manner, "Death!"

Pa! His arm waved as his entire body slammed into Qilangos's head with numerous afterimages. His fist had struck his target's head in an unavoidable manner.

Kacha! Qilangos's head shattered, but the surroundings shattered as well. Duke Negan remained standing at his original spot. It was just a dream.

It was unknown when the pirate admiral had already switched his ability and entered the Nightmare state.

Unlike an ordinary Nightmare, he could still move his body after he dragged people into a dream!

Qilangos stealthily appeared behind Duke Negan, and his cold gaze locked onto the Duke.

Wrapped with high-speed spiraling winds, his right fist stabbed into the target's vest like a sharp blade.

Whoosh!

Amidst the howling of the wind, Qilangos's right fist punched straight through Duke Negan's body and through his heart. But Duke Negan's figure rapidly turned transparent, just like a soul that was summoned.

After the nearly formless figure dissipated, Duke Negan appeared before the French door on the other side of the winding corridor. He wore a scrutinizing smile.

Another Beyonder… They prepared ahead of time? To lay an ambush for me?

How is that possible?!

Although Qilangos was unwilling to accept this fact, he dealt with it calmly.

The glove on his left hand squirmed and took on the form of dark golden scales. His irises grew pale and became vertical.

Then, a shapeless wave swept from every direction. Ladies and gentlemen were thrown into a state of uncontrollable fear at the same time. They left their hiding places and ran around aimlessly. The scene became chaotic.

The Beyonders didn't dare to act recklessly as they were worried they might hurt their relatives and friends.

Seizing the opportunity, Qilangos ran quickly as hurricanes whirled around him. He smashed through one of the resting room doors before smashing through an oriel window.

Amidst the shattering sound, he leaped outside and flew a distance away from Duke Negan's mansion with the aid of the wind.

The moment he landed, Qilangos immediately ran towards a forest ahead of him. It was a municipal garden—an escape route he had scouted out a while ago.

Once he shook off his pursuers, he could change his appearance and blend into the massive population of Backlund of more than five million people.

That was also the reason why he dared to accept such a difficult mission!

After a while, there was gale blowing towards Duke Negan's mansion. The Cardinal of the Church of the Lord of Storms, the Archbishop of Backlund, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake brought a few Mandated Punishers and flew towards the mansion.

He couldn't inform the other Beyonders in time.

Alger was one of the members that arrived with Archbishop Ace. However, he was in a bad mood because he saw the broken windows and the other Beyonders running out of the mansion.

It meant that Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos had escaped.

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CHAPTER 191
UNCLEAR MOTIVES

Qilangos lost his pursuers with the help of the wind after crossing a man-made lake.

He surveyed his surroundings, intending to create the illusion that he had entered a ditch to escape into the Tussock River before turning to the financial center of Backlund, the Hillston Borough.

At that moment, his field of vision suddenly blurred. He saw the colors around him saturate in the darkness.

The green trees became greener, their red fruits even redder. The dark blackness of the water became darker. Everything appeared to be splashed with pastel paint.

Under the sky where the crimson moon was obscured, there were many indescribable, transparent figures, as well as different lustrous splendors that contained mysterious knowledge.

Qilangos found himself coming to a halt as he floated in midair. Beneath his feet, dark water continually rose towards him. Under the water were pale white palms, reaching out for him.

Not good! Qilangos realized that he had been ambushed.

And the ambusher was definitely not weak!

A giant humanoid skeleton suddenly appeared before him. The monster was four meters tall, and burning in its eye sockets were pitch black flames. The

bones on its body were blurry and illusory.

Qilangos gave his enemy an expressionless look as he let out a sneer.

At the same time, the glove on his left hand released a radiant light, appearing as if it was cast out of pure gold.

Qilangos leaned back and spread his arms wide, as though he was trying to hug the sun.

A bolt of pure, burning brilliance descended from the sky, enveloping the giant skeleton. The pastel-like world quaked in response, and the pale hands under the dark water evaporated one by one.

This was the Beyonder powers of the Priest of Light!

It was a Beyonder power from the Sun Sequence pathway!

It was the nemesis of the undead!

The radiant pillar of light dissipated, and the pitch black flames of the giant skeleton instantly extinguished. It then turned transparent as it disintegrated in the air.

Before Qilangos had the time to use the abilities of the Priest of Light to dispel the pastel-like world, his expression abruptly turned rigid.

He saw another giant skeleton appear to his left. It was also four meters tall, its eyes burning with a black flame, identical to the monster from before.

Immediately following that, the same skeletal monster appeared around Qilangos, one after another. One, two, three… there were more than a hundred of them!

More than a hundred pairs of burning black flames cast their gaze onto their target at the same time.

Underneath him, the dark water surface rose higher, almost coming into contact with Qilangos's feet.

Pale white hands extended outward, flailing them around constantly, as though they were grabbing at a life-saving straw.

…

"Spread out and pursue him. Try to corner him," Instructed the Cardinal—Ace Snake. He conjured a typhoon and took to the air, flying toward the direction where Qilangos had fled.

Duke Negan and the rest didn't join the ranks of Mandated Punishers in consideration of their statuses; instead, they stood at the windows or balconies to observe. It was also at this moment when the ordinary nobles who were running around frantically slowly calmed down.

Due to the darkness and the undulating shouts, they were unsure of what exactly happened. All they knew was that Duke Negan might have encountered an assassin.

Alger Wilson clenched his jaw and ran out of Duke Negan's mansion, following the path of the municipal garden into the Hillston Borough.

He wasn't willing to miss this opportunity, no matter how small the hope was!

Suddenly, he heard a voice which was carried to him by the wind, "There's no need to continue the pursuit."

*No need to continue the pursuit? The voice of Cardinal Snake… *Alger stopped after just running a few steps forward. He turned to look into the sky, puzzled.

He saw Cardinal Snake, who was wearing a black robe adorned with many storm symbols, floating above the forest and the man-made lake and staring

down.

Alger creased his brows and sped over to where the Cardinal was without considering the reason.

As he neared his position, he made use of his Seafarer abilities to get a clearer look.

The Spellsinger of God showed no expression, but his posture made it evident that he was serious. His exposed white hair that peeked out from under his black hat swayed with the wind, accentuating his stern silver eyes.

Alger retracted his gaze and ran out of the forest.

The scene of the calm pond reflecting the crimson moonlight suddenly appeared in his eyes. On the pond's surface, a tall figure was floating near the bank.

That figure had a unique wide jaw, his brown hair was tied in a ponytail. His dark green eyes were cold, yet blank.

Qilangos!

Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos!

Alger was taken aback at first, then he felt both surprise and joy. He couldn't believe his eyes. and even suspected that the darkness was causing him to hallucinate.

Before he could react, he suddenly saw Qilangos's face rot rapidly. It oozed a yellow-green liquid, his flesh peeling off piece by piece.

Pat! Pat! Pat!

All that was left of Qilangos's face was a skull, his two vacant eyeballs fell from their sockets and onto the ground beside the lake.

Qilangos fell apart completely. His clothes draped over his rotting flesh and white bones and blocked the sparkling radiance.

In less than twenty seconds, one of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Qilangos, had died mysteriously in front of Alger's eyes.

This shocking scene was etched deeply into Alger's mind. It made him suspect if he was having a terrifying nightmare.

What was happening?

Didn't Qilangos escape successfully?

Why did he die so simply, yet so mysteriously here?

What did he encounter, for him to lose his life in such a short amount of time…

He's a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, the owner of Creeping Hunger!

Who did it?

What was the motive for killing Qilangos…

Just as countless ideas flooded Alger's mind, he heard Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake's, charismatic voice, "Did you give the information to anyone else?

"Is there anyone else who knows of this information?"

Alger quickly calmed down. He glanced at Qilangos's remains and gave an explanation that he had prepared.

"I reported the information to you the moment I found out about it."

He couldn't help but grumble inwardly. *If it wasn't for the fact that Ace Snake had gone for a walk along the Tussock River, forcing me to spend time finding him, Qilangos might not have even escaped Duke Negan's mansion!*

Of course, he didn't dare say this in front of a High-Sequence Beyonder. He could only respectfully and humbly continue, "The personnel who received the information directly even sacrificed himself for it, and no one opened the letter during its transfer, I can vouch for this.

"But I cannot confirm if there was a leak at the source of this information. Since we could learn of it, others might have too."

As Alger spoke, he formulated some guesses about who killed Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

The person or organization who tasked Qilangos to assassinate Duke Negan? Since Qilangos had already successfully escaped and there was no threat of any information leaks, there's no need to kill him… If it were me, I would get Qilangos to lay low and try another assassination attempt when everyone was certain that he had left Backlund…

Also, Qilangos only trusts himself, so he wouldn't tell his assassination plan to anyone. Duke Negan has been organizing gatherings lately in preparation for his bill proposal in September, so there are abundant opportunities. Other than Qilangos himself, there's no one who can correctly predict when he would strike. U-unless that person was a Prophet… But that is unlikely…

Other factions? Not possible. Miss Justice prayed to Mr. Fool to relay the information the moment she noticed a problem. There was no way another organization could've received the information at the same time…

Mr. Fool… Alger was shocked as he thought of a possibility.

The person who struck was Mr. Fool's adorer!

He happened to be in Backlund and thus lent a hand!

The more he thought about it, the more Alger felt that this guess was close to the truth.

Only the members and subordinates of the Tarot Club could've received the information in time!

Only the help of The Fool's adorer could make it seem so mysterious and without motive!

Just as he was immersed in his thoughts, Cardinal Snake fell silent for a moment. He told the rest of the Mandated Punishers who were making their way over, "Qilangos is dead. A High-Sequence Beyonder, or someone who used a Sealed Artifact of a similar-level killed him. But this is rather dangerous and highly unlikely.

"After a preliminary analysis, I believe that the High-Sequence Beyonder is of the pathway of Death, perhaps a member of the Numinous Episcopate, but not someone I know of. There's also the possibility of it being a member of another secret organization.

"The motive is unclear."

The Numinous Episcopate originated from the Southern Continent. Legend has it that it was first formed by a descendant of Death in an attempt to revive Death. They were nearly eradicated after the Southern Continent was colonized, but they stubbornly survived and spread toward the countries of the Northern Continent.

A High-Sequence Beyonder… Yes, only a High-Sequence Beyonder could kill Qilangos in such a short amount of time! Just a mere adorer of Mr. Fool is already at such a high sequence… That's a Demigod! Alger once again looked at the pile of flesh and bone. He felt dissociated from everything as if he had lost all his emotion. He stood there in a daze, watching everything.

If I happened to betray Mr. Fool one day… He suddenly had such a thought.

Immediately, the terrifying scene of Qilangos rapidly rotting appeared in his mind.

Alger couldn't help but shiver and lower his head.

At the same time, he relaxed.

Since he couldn't escape or fight back, then he could only choose to be loyal.

*Phew… With Qilangos dead, no one can threaten me with that secret anymore! *He exhaled, his worries completely vanishing.

…

In Duke Negan's mansion, Audrey Hall, who was discussing the assassination with her mother and the other nobles, saw her father appear at the door.

She found an excuse and left the resting room for the balcony at the main hall.

"Father, is something wrong?" Audrey looked at Count Hall with her green eyes.

Her green eyes had come from her mother, not her father.

Count Hall smiled.

"It's been resolved, my child. You need not worry any longer.

"Hmm… Did you tell anyone that Baron Gramir was an imposter?"

"No." Audrey shook her head firmly.

I only told an almost godlike existence… She added in her heart.

She thought for a moment, then explained herself, "After I told you, I went to the bathroom, then to where Mother was. You can ask her."

"I see." Count Hall nodded and didn't say anything else before mentioning, "Qilangos is dead. Someone killed him."

"Who?" Audrey was as shocked as she was excited.

"No idea. We can't even figure out why the murderer killed Qilangos. It's truly incomprehensible." Count Hall paused. "Perhaps, it's a person or an organization, a secret and powerful organization."

Unclear motive… A secret, powerful organization… Could it be Mr. Fool's adorer? It could be our Tarot Club! Audrey suddenly had an epiphany.

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CHAPTER 192
ATTENTION

Audrey analyzed many things at once as her mind whirled.

Mr. Hanged Man said that Qilangos was a lone wolf who doesn't trust anyone. Only he would know of his own plan. Other than my early discovery of him, there shouldn't have been anyone else who knew he would attempt the assassination tonight…

I only told Father and Mr. Fool that I suspected that Qilangos was disguised as Baron Gramir…

Although there's a telegram cable in Duke Negan's mansion and he would've been able to send out information in time to ask for help, there's no reason to hide that… Dad's puzzlement implies that the powerful being that killed Qilangos wasn't within their expectations…

Combining all of the above, I can almost be certain that the person who killed Qilangos was Mr. Fool's adorer!

Plus, only the unique model of the Tarot Club can create such a strange situation with unclear motives!

Qilangos was a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed, and he had the magical item—the Creeping Hunger. To be able to quickly kill him without leaving any traces behind, it could only be a High-Sequence Beyonder known also as Demigods, right? Or maybe he used a Sealed Artifact which possesses immense danger?

Regardless of the possibility, it shows that Mr. Fool's adorer is extremely powerful…

Mr. Fool lives up to his reputation!

Regardless, I certainly provided clues, so Mr. Hanged Man has to carry out his promise and pass me the pituitary gland of a Rainbow Salamander!

This should be our Tarot Club's very first mission, right?

One of the Seven Pirate Admirals, Qilangos, died because of us!

Looking at his daughter who seemed excited, Count Hall, who was a handsome man in his youth, coughed lightly and warned his daughter with a mask of solemnity, "Audrey, I know that you're very interested in mysticism, and I normally tolerate it. But you mustn't be involved in this. You can't even ask about it. You will be introduced by the Queen to the Backlund social scene events by the end of this year. As an adult, you should clearly know and remember that a terrifying Beyonder, or a powerful, hidden organization, is equivalent to danger. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, Father," Audrey replied charmingly. "I was just a little curious."

"Curiosity won't do either!" Count Hall emphasized, and he couldn't help but let out a helpless smile.

"Okay!" Audrey nodded obediently.

I understand the whole incident better than you do anyway… She made a silly face in her head.

Count Hall thought and said with a gentle smile, "Regardless, you are the heroine tonight, the savior of Duke Negan. Half of the reason why Qilangos is dead is partially because of you, and it's the same with the bounty. Of course, if there's no one that admits to killing Qilangos and comes to

receive the bounty, the remaining half of it will be yours too. Added together, it will be ten thousand pounds in total.

"Hmm, the bounties set up by the Intis Republic, the Feysac Empire, and other countries and organizations could be received as well. After conversion, there should be about twenty thousand pounds in total.

"Duke Negan promised that he would give you his holiday estate at Desi Bay as a gift. It includes a huge rubber tree plantation. I don't know the annual profit exactly, but it definitely won't be low. He spent eight thousand pounds to buy it back then and later, even built a house and purchased good quality seeds for planting."

Audrey, who already had an inheritance of three hundred thousand pounds, was considered rich. However, a reward that was almost forty thousand pounds was still a huge amount of income. Many noble ladies wouldn't even receive such a figure as a dowry.

In an allied marriage of a noble and a businessman in August, Miss Mary Oldbury, the daughter of a millionaire, only had an eighty-thousand-pound dowry.

I never considered the bounty… Audrey muttered inwardly.

Suddenly, she thought of something. If she were to receive the bounty and her name spread, The Hanged Man could easily find out who Justice was.

This can't happen! As a member of the Tarot Club, I have to maintain a sense of mystery! Audrey looked towards her dad and reorganized her words.

"Dad, I'm a little worried…"

"Why? What happened?" Count Hall asked in concern.

"If it were to spread that I found out that Qilangos was disguised as Baron Gramir, I'm afraid that his underlings would take revenge on me. I'm afraid that whoever instructed Qilangos to assassinate Duke Negan would target me…" Audrey tried to make herself seem pitiful, weak, and helpless.

"I'll hire someone to protect you," Count Hall replied. Then, he nodded faintly and said, "there's really no need for you to take such a risk. Plus, the person that killed Qilangos took the Creeping Hunger. Of course, to a High-Sequence Beyonder, that wouldn't be a strong enough motive for interfering… Yes, I'll inform Duke Negan to keep this a secret and tell someone else to receive the bounty on your behalf and compensate you in private."

Then, Count Hall smiled and said, "You really are my daughter. You earned forty thousand pounds so easily. This is more than one-tenth of your current wealth."

The three hundred thousand pounds was what he had set aside for her in advance. He would still add in another part when she got married as his daughter's inheritance.

"Am I as good as you were?" Audrey happily asked in reply.

Count Hall shook his head and laughed.

"Much better than I was. The profit from my very first business venture was only sixty pounds."

Audrey suddenly became extremely thrilled. The satisfaction derived from receiving a forty thousand pound bounty, getting her father's compliment, causing Qilangos's death, completing an extraordinary task, and the reward of a Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland that she was going to get from The Hanged Man amplified her happiness.

I really want to report this to Mr. Fool to get his reassurance… No, no way. A powerful, mysterious being killed Qilangos with an unknown motive.

There might be someone observing me in secret, looking for clues regarding Qilangos's death. I can't show any hint of abnormality… Pui! There's nothing abnormal about me to begin with. As long as I don't attempt to recite Mr. Fool's honorary name…

Hmm, if Mr. Fool's adorer was really the murderer, He must've already known the outcome. He wouldn't need me to report it to him… Well… do I need to share the bounty with the adorer? No, no matter what kind of payment method is used to transfer twenty thousand pounds, it would definitely draw attention. I can't take the risk…

Plus, it has always been The Hanged Man who's been asking for help from Mr. Fool. Technically, he should pay the reward. Yes, yes, after all, he declared that he had many pages of Emperor Roselle's diary!

I'll try to gather more pages of the diary to thank Mr. Fool for answering my prayers. He definitely wouldn't be interested in crass money…

Audrey quickly determined her next course of action

…

In Duke Negan's mansion, in a secret study room.

The fat and tall Duke sat on a high back chair behind a desk. He was smoking a cigar as he looked at the Spellsinger of God—Ace Snake, Prime Minister Aiur Negan, and the others opposite him.

"Based on our current knowledge, we still aren't certain of the identity of the High-Sequence Beyonder that killed Qilangos." Prime Minister Aguesid Negan had just rushed over from the King's side.

Archbishop Snake nodded.

"We've determined that it wasn't any of the High-Sequence Beyonders that we're familiar with or the Numinous Episcopate either.

"We have sufficient reason to believe that it's a powerful, mysterious Beyonder we aren't aware of. Of course, we haven't eliminated the possibility that the person was using a dangerous Sealed Artifact."

Duke Negan held his cigar and said, "Maybe it wasn't just a High-Sequence Beyonder. There might be a hidden organization behind that person, a hidden organization that we don't know enough about. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to lay in ambush for Qilangos so accurately. Yes, perhaps one of the guests at tonight's ball is a member of theirs."

His brother, Prime Minister Aguesid stated solemnly, "Regardless of that possibility, we have to be careful. We have to quickly find out the identity of the High-Sequence Beyonder, the purpose of his presence in Backlund, and why he killed Qilangos."

A High-Sequence Beyonder that they didn't know about, who wandering in Backlund, was sufficient to draw attention from the government and three major Churches!

Although a Sequence 4 or Sequence 3 Beyonder might not be able to withstand the cannon attacks of their warships, there was no need for them to experience a frontal assault. They possessed too much of a mysterious power.

Hence, they were existences even more dangerous than ironclad warships. Hence the reason why they were called "Demigods"!

Spellsinger of God—Ace Snake stood up and said, "Let me make some arrangements and get into contact with the Church of the Evernight Goddess, the Church of the God of Steam, and Machinery Hivemind."

"His Majesty will allow the military and the intelligence agencies to cooperate," Prime Minister Aguesid promised.

…

In a hotel in the North Borough of Backlund.

Azik sat under a gas lamp and looked at the glove before him.

The glove was very thin, as though it was made from human skin. It seemed that as long as it was filled with flesh and blood, it would turn into a hand.

Azik looked at it for a very long time. His face suddenly contorted in agony and pain as he muttered, "I seem to, seem to have cooperated with them before…"

…

Klein didn't sleep well the entire night because he didn't receive any reports from Justice or The Hanged Man, nor did he receive any reply from Mr. Azik. He kept thinking about the outcome of the incident with Qilangos.

It must've been quite a scene if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man didn't dare to contact me recklessly… But why didn't Mr. Azik reply to my letter? Did he not get involved, or was there an accident? Did Qilangos hurt him? Klein extended his hand and covered his mouth as he yawned. He got onto the trackless carriage that headed for Zouteland Street.

"Extra! Extra! Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!

"Extra! Extra! Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!"

…

Just as the carriage was about to set off, Klein suddenly heard the paperboy, which was also one of the Emperor Roselle's inventions.

Klein was momentarily stunned as he quickly fished out a penny and bought the Tingen Morning Post. Many passengers made the same choice.

He opened the newspaper and quickly read the headline.

Pirate Qilangos shot dead by Duke's bodyguard in Backlund.

Qilangos died? Mr. Azik did it? Klein fell into deep thought and lampooned himself, *As the boss behind the scenes, I actually had to find out the outcome from the newspapers…*

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CHAPTER 193
COMING TO A CLOSE

The article covering what happened to Qilangos wasn't long, and all it stated was the time, place, people involved, and the outcome. As the saying goes, the more succinct the content, the more serious the situation.

Something that happened in Backlund at eight or nine last night is already being reported in Tingen City this morning. The spread of information in this world isn't too slow due to the exceptional contributions of Emperor Roselle. It must've been one of the nobles or ministers who attended the ball who leaked this information to some reporter, then that reporter used the telegraph to send this sensational news to the news companies in various counties…

The morning papers are usually drafted at night and printed after midnight before being distributed in the morning. There was just enough time to make changes and publish this article…

Just based on this news, the Tingen Morning Post would be able to sell an extra thousand copies. And that's only considering just this city…

Klein's thoughts became more and more distracted before finally calming down.

Since Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos is dead, that means that even if Mr. Azik is injured, it wouldn't be too serious…

If it was serious, he definitely would've been captured by the Mandated Punishers or Duke Negan's Beyonder bodyguards that were in pursuit of Qilangos. And when facing such a situation, Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged

Man would definitely try their best to report it to me. The latter not happening is enough to indicate that everything is under control…

Yes, if Mr. Azik doesn't give me a reply, or if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man do not pray to me by tonight, I'll blow the copper whistle once again to summon the messenger and send over a letter of inquiry…

Relaxing, Klein shifted his attention away from the newspaper, then he surveyed the public carriage.

Most of the people who could afford transport like this could read, and under the influence of the term "extra," many had bought the Tingen Morning Post. Now, a few of them were quietly discussing the incident.

"The King of Pirates and the admirals have been terrorizing the sea routes for a long time. They back off when they see the battleships of the various countries, but they don't pay much regard to merchant ships… Even though Qilangos had only been inducted as one of the Seven Pirate Admirals for less than a decade, he's the first to be killed by the government…"

"Frankly, I'm curious as to what he was doing in Backlund? When a pirate leaves the ocean, death is a foreseeable outcome."

"Let's hope that there will be a more detailed report in the future."

"Holy Lord of Storms, I wish to know which of Duke Negan's bodyguards killed Qilangos. His bounty was a full 10,000 pounds!"

"10,000 pounds… If I had 10,000 pounds, I would immediately quit my job and buy two or three medium-sized nurseries. I would invest in the shares of some colonizing companies and railroad companies, and receive a stable dividend every year…"

"That's only the bounty of this kingdom. Intis, Feysac, Feynapotter, and some merchant organizations also have bounties for Rear Admiral

Hurricane Qilangos. I sure hope that there's a newspaper that will give a full list of the bounties."

10,000 pounds? Klein was shocked to hear that.

With his already impressive pay, he would have to take twenty years to be able to save up that much money even without eating or drinking.

*If only… Forget it, there's nothing I can do either. It would be impossible for me to claim the bounty… *He folded the newspaper a little dejectedly and looked out the window of the carriage.

At this point, he finally concluded that the incident with Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos had come to a close. All that was left was to tie up the loose ends, such as the batch of Roselle's diary that The Hanged Man had promised him.

…

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors Wall and Xio Derecha were walking along the street towards the nearest branch of the Varvat Bank.

"My money seems to disappear without me noticing." Fors sighed.

Xio felt the same way.

"That's right."

"Luckily, my book, Stormwind Mountain Villa, is rather popular, and there are still royalties being sent to my account. Otherwise, I'd have to find a clinic or a hospital and become a doctor once again." Fors let out a sigh, both in satisfaction and in worry.

Xio was silent for a moment before carefully asking, "Will the investigation of Qilangos affect your status as an author? After all, we could be under the attention of the Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, and the rest…"

"No, the only one they would focus on is you." Fors laughed. "You were the one who sent someone to make a police report. Same for the one who sent the letter and the one famous among the alleys and gangs of the East Borough. As for me, Fors Wall, I'm still the popular best-selling author."

Xio said in a daze, "So you've just been accompanying me all this time?"

Fors stroked her hair and laughed.

"Don't you find that this was an interesting experience? This experience has provided me with the much-needed inspiration for my work. My next novel will be about a sudden brutal murder."

Xio paused, not knowing how to continue the conversation. All she could do was continue walking forward bitterly, forgetting to make a turn until Fors dragged her back.

At that moment, they heard a paperboy shout.

"Extra! Extra! Rear Admiral Hurricane Qilangos killed in Backlund!"

…

Ah? What? Xio and Fors looked at each other in confusion.

They only came to their senses after the paperboy repeated himself multiple times.

"What? Qilangos is dead?" Fors couldn't believe what she was hearing.

"He's dead! How did he die so suddenly!" Xio, who was trying to hide from the prosecution of this merciless pirate, was shocked and dazed.

This… doesn't this have to follow a normal procedure? First, they find clues to confirm Qilangos's motive, then they would gather powerful Beyonders and ambush him. Killing the pirate was the last step… But, Qilangos was killed even though the first step hadn't been completed yet… He died just like that… Fors and Xio exchanged looks as if they were two marble statues.

Nearly a minute later, Xio charged towards the paperboy and bought a copy of the Tussock Times.

This was one of the three most distributed newspapers in the Loen Kingdom.

"Oh… Qilangos is really dead, killed by Duke Negan's bodyguard. Oh Goddess, Negan's bodyguard is…" Xio gasped, leaving out the "a powerful Beyonder," that she had wanted to say.

Fors looked at her good friend in pity.

"To think that you would believe everything the newspapers say…"

"Alright, perhaps someone realized Qilangos's motive in advance, and the Mandated Punishers, Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and the military cooperated and executed a successful ambush…" Xio froze and exhaled. "We don't need to worry about it any longer. We can go back to our normal lives, but we have to avoid the sphere of influence of that police station from before."

She looked at Fors and asked, a little worried, "How much do you think Miss Audrey will pay us now? I know that a few hundred pounds wouldn't be too much to her, but we haven't really completed what she asked of us…"

"No, at least we made Qilangos appear on his own accord. The reason he rushed to take action and fall for the ambush was definitely in some part

due to our contributions," Fors consoled her. "With Miss Audrey's generosity, she'll give us half the reward even if she's not giving us all of it."

"Let's hope so…" Xio took in a deep breath and had an expectant gaze. "I wonder who will claim that bounty of 10,000 pounds…"

"It sure invites the envy of others. If I had that much money, I'd have become a Sequence 7 or 6 long ago, but I missed the opportunity time and time again!" Fors also felt a little sorry, but she reminded her friend, "Xio, let us not contact Miss Audrey for the time being. Let her contact us on her own accord. There are too many hidden details surrounding the death of Qilangos. Looking for Miss Audrey abruptly could put us in a dangerous situation."

Xio first nodded before saying in surprise, "How did you know that I was thinking of heading to Empress Borough?"

"Try guessing?" Fors laughed in response.

…

After a busy morning, Klein returned to the Blackthorn Security Company. He reported to Dunn Smith, "Captain, the people connected to Lanevus that I'm in charge of investigating have no problems. They were merely victims, not associated with any Beyonder incidents."

Dunn placed both his elbows on his desk.

"Then stop that for the time being. We shall place our focus on the more likely suspects after the rest of the members have finished with their investigations. We cannot direct all our manpower onto this incident. We have to guard against other sudden incidents."

"Alright." Klein was about to stand up and head to lunch when he suddenly heard knocking on the door.

"Please enter," Dunn said in his mellow voice.

The handle moved and Rozanne peeked inside.

"Captain, someone is here with a mission."

A mission… This seems to be targeted at the Blackthorn Security Company and not the Nighthawks Squad. So, who mistakenly came to us this time? Klein wondered to himself.

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, "We can go hear the request out and reject it if it's too troublesome."

He arranged his shirt and vest as he walked out of the office. He made his way through the partition and towards the sofa in the receptionist area. Klein and Rozanne followed curiously behind.

There were two ladies on the sofa, both of them were wearing black hats and dresses without any extra color.

One of the ladies was plump and had fair skin. Her face was completely obscured by the black veil of her hat.

Klein felt a sense of familiarity when he saw her, as though he had seen her somewhere before.

Just as he was recalling, he heard the skinnier lady beside her speak.

"The mission we would like to entrust to you is for you to track and monitor Madam Sharon and find evidence of her crimes."

Madam Sharon… Klein suddenly had an epiphany, and recalled where the sense of familiarity came from.

The lady that remained silent was the wife of Member of Parliament Maynard, the daughter of the New Party's leader.

She finds it hard to accept the death of her husband and is unwilling to accept the conclusion the police department came to, so she came to a security company in private to do another investigation?

To think that she came directly to us… Klein shook his head and laughed to himself.

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CHAPTER 194
INFILTRATION

"Madam Sharon?" Dunn obviously knew of Baron Khoy's widow, a famous socialite in Tingen.

Maynard's wife turned her head to shoot a glance at the scrawny lady who came with her to the Blackthorn Security Company, but she didn't speak for herself.

The scrawny lady in the black dress and hat weighed her words before she spoke.

"Yes, Madam Sharon, the wife of the deceased Baron Khoy. She, she…"

She stammered, then suddenly spat in anger, "She's a b*tch!"

Upon hearing her curse, Klein suddenly recalled the porno that he had seen and Madam Sharon's behavior which appeared nervous on the surface but was calm deep down. That made him believe the rumors about her, and he felt sorry for the deceased old baron.

It's not like Madam Sharon can't remarry. But her loose behavior… really makes the old baron's grave a perfect nesting ground for cuckoos…

Dunn didn't have much of a change in his facial expression. He sat on the sofa opposite and said with his mellow voice, "But that doesn't make her a criminal.

"You know clearly, and I know it clearly too. Madam Sharon is very influential in Tingen. If we were to follow her and monitor her, there could

be very serious consequences for us."

"She's a criminal!" the scrawny lady said angrily. "She caused my brother's death, but those lovers of hers pressured the police department and made them pronounce that my brother died of excessive drinking and continuous indulgence in sexual pleasure. Th-they are all criminals!"

Those… Klein realized that the scrawny lady was Maynard's sister while feeling sorry for the old baron once again.

That's right, for such a scandal, she would definitely not send a maidservant here. It's better if the request is made by family… He nodded his head in enlightenment.

Mrs. Maynard patted the back of the scrawny woman's hand and added with a deep yet cold voice, "She's a criminal! If you suffer any damages because of this, I will compensate you for your losses."

That tone… She lives up to her identity as the daughter of the New Party's head. If the police department wasn't very confident with the result of my mediumship ritual, I'm afraid they would've submitted under her pressure… Klein lampooned inwardly.

Dunn was silent for nearly twenty seconds before he said, "Alright… I have another question. Why do you seem to be so certain that we would find something?"

The scrawny lady nodded and said, "The tobacco merchant, Vickroy, introduced us here. He said that you're the cream of the crop in this industry and can complete missions that others aren't capable of completing."

The tobacco merchant Vickroy… Who's he? Klein looked at Captain subconsciously and noticed that Dunn Smith looked really confused.

I'm so silly, why did I hope for Captain to remember something like this… After all, even I don't quite remember… He sighed.

The scrawny lady saw that the two elite mercenaries looked confused, so she added, "You saved his kidnapped son."

Oh, him… That kidnap case led me to the discovery of the Antigonus family's notebook… Klein was suddenly enlightened.

Dunn nodded slightly and said, "I understand."

Upon seeing this, the scrawny woman laid out her offer, "You are to tail and monitor th-that b*tch for two weeks. Even if you don't find any evidence of her crime, you have to take note of who visited her and who she visited. We will pay fifty pounds for this.

"And if you find evidence of her crimes, we would pay another additional two hundred pounds."

*That's a large sum of money… *When Klein suddenly recalled that he had only spent seven pounds to hire Detective Henry to gather so much information about red chimney houses, he became a little ashamed.

Dunn thought for a moment before saying, "No problem, we can sign the contract now. You'll have to pay a deposit of twenty pounds up front."

Captain, we're really lacking in manpower right now. There's the huge case regarding Lanevus… Klein didn't expect Dunn Smith to accept the mission although he, himself, was quite keen on accepting it.

Mrs. Maynard nodded slightly and said, "No problem. I believe in you. Please don't disappoint me."

Dunn smiled but kept quiet. He turned his head and told Rozanne, "Please write up a contract."

When the contract was signed and the deposit was paid, Dunn watched Mrs. Maynard and the scrawny lady leave the Blackthorn Security Company. He then looked sideways at Klein and said, "This mission will be yours."

"Huh?" Klein looked confused.

Dunn smiled and said, "Didn't you want to learn tailing techniques and monitoring skills? This is a great opportunity. It also turns out that you're done with your part in the Lanevus case."

"Alright…" Klein didn't reject the assignment.

Just as he accepted, his mind began whirling quickly.

According to the rules, half of the mission's commission is handed to Mrs. Orianna as additional funding for the team. The remaining would be split among the involved members. However, it seems like I'm the only one handling the case…

Regardless of whether the investigation succeeds, there will be at least twenty-five pounds of income. On top of that, I'll receive my usual weekly pay… If I really could find some clues, I could even receive a hundred and twenty-five pounds!

Captain is a wise man!

Dunn stole a glance at him and said, "Learn the tailing techniques and monitoring skills from Leonard and Frye in the morning, and put your combat training on hold for this week. Yes… I think you're quite well-trained already, so I'll send someone to inform Gawain."

Learn tailing techniques and monitoring skills from Leonard and Frye? That doesn't seem very reliable… Klein was stunned. He could imagine Leonard using only one method which was playing his Feynapotter lute while singing melodious poetry. Then, he would probably seduce Madam Sharon to bed in order to "monitor her up close." As for Frye, he had a unique air to him. He was cold and gloomy, so no matter where he went, he would catch the attention of others. How could such people make good spies?

As his thoughts churned, Klein replied seriously, "Alright."

Dunn nodded slightly and walked towards the partition. Suddenly, he paused, turned around, and hesitated before he spoke.

"Do you remember the tobacco merchant? What's was the kidnapping about?"

… So you didn't remember anything or understood anything… Why were you acting so staid and confident!? Klein facepalmed.

…

Based on Leonard's guidance, Klein wasn't in a hurry to tail Madam Sharon, even though he knew that she stayed on Osna Street in the East Borough.

*"Until you know the target's routine, you can't tail your target recklessly. Plus, monitoring alone makes it difficult to take note of everything. Unless you don't eat, drink, sleep, and go home," *Leonard had said. Hence, Klein followed his suggestion and found one of the triad bosses in the Hound Pub and spent five pounds to get his underlings to monitor Madam Sharon and record her daily routine.

*Luckily, this can be reimbursed… Why does it feel like I'm subcontracting… *On Friday afternoon, Klein received the investigation report from the triad boss.

Calling it an investigation report was an obvious insult to professional detectives. Not one of the triad boss's underlings was literate. They relied on drawings and symbols, which was then interpreted and organized by their semi-literate boss who had attended Sunday School for a year. Klein got a headache just from reading it and took quite a while to finish reading the report.

According to the surveillance, Madam Sharon seldom leaves her place recently. There aren't many guests who visit either… She might be affected

by Maynard's death… Those triad underlings are quite capable. They even gathered information from Madam Sharon's maidservant… Hmm, she will be attending the Conservative Party's banquet tonight. She might return home quite late, or maybe not return… This is an opportunity for me to put theory into practice. Klein quickly decided to sneak into Madam Sharon's house and search through it.

With his duties regarding the Lanevus case over, the temporary suspension of combat training, and the end of the Qilangos incident, Klein only had two matters on hand. One was to investigate the red chimney houses, and the second was following and monitoring Madam Sharon. In other words, he was relatively free.

Two days ago, he had received Mr. Azik's reply. There was only one sentence on the letter.

"I obtained the Creeping Hunger and recalled something."

Klein had finally confirmed that it was Mr. Azik who killed Qilangos and that this amnesiac teacher of his who had a long life was a High-Sequence Beyonder. However, he didn't dare ask him what he had recalled with the aid of the Creeping Hunger. Azik obviously didn't want to talk about it. If he was willing to share, he would've described it directly in the letter.

In Klein's reply, he only reminded Mr. Azik that the Creeping Hunger yearned for the flesh, blood, and soul of living humans. He had to find a safe sealing method.

In addition, Justice and The Hanged Man had yet to pray to him, but Klein wasn't worried. He understood that both members were afraid of being monitored, so they didn't recite his name recklessly.

…

Gas street lamps illuminated the straight Osna Street at night while the crimson moon hung high above.

Klein, who had sneaked out with the Clown's balance and agility, leaped over the outer wall of Madam Sharon's house quietly.

Passing through the garden, he arrived by the side of the house. He climbed up the water pipe and slipped onto the balcony on the second floor.

Klein had never even climbed a tree successfully when he was young, so it was quite a monumental event.

He took out a tarot card from the pocket of his black windbreaker, slotted it into the gap of the balcony door, lifted it lightly, and unlocked the door.

The servants are so careless… They didn't use an additional lock. Otherwise, I'd have to try *entering by climbing through the window…* Klein muttered silently and entered the house.

Based on the information provided by the triad boss, he found Madam Sharon's bedroom easily. He turned the knob and stepped into the room.

He closed the door carefully and suddenly smelled a faint fragrance. It reminded him of the fragrance of a woman that caused the blood vessels of other people to swell.

Klein felt a little faint, and he even felt his body reacting.

He immediately calmed down with Cogitation and made a self-deprecating comment, "She's using an aphrodisiac as perfume?"

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CHAPTER 195 "LOCKPICKING EXPERT" KLEIN

A few seconds later, Klein activated his Spirit Vision and surveyed the room, only to find how extravagantly decorated Madam Sharon's room was.

In a spacious area with a cloakroom that was ajar, there was a thick carpet, a blanket made with goose feathers, a makeup table strewn with skin care products and cosmetics, a dazzling array of jewelry, thin clothing and socks thrown over the rocking chair, and multiple decorative items adorned with gold silk. All of these entered Klein's field of vision.

What attracted Klein's attention the most was an unfinished oil painting. On the painting was the naked figure of Madam Sharon herself—her brown hair like a waterfall, her eyes like an innocent deer's, pure and limpid. But her curved eyebrows, sharp nose, and tender lips accentuated her form as a mature female. The two qualities fused together despite the contradiction, releasing an alarming temptation.

Klein only gave a cursory glance at the area under the neck for a moment. He wasn't trying to be gentlemanly. After all, he had already seen the porno, so why would he have scruples over a picture?

His attention had been grabbed by the pastels, palettes, and paintbrushes beside the painting, as well as a full-length silver-coated mirror.

This combination and their placement relative to each other gave Klein a weird thought that the painter was Madam Sharon herself, and not some artist she had seduced.

*A beautiful woman with a great figure, flirtatious yet innocent, stripping and drawing herself while looking in the mirror to chronicle her beauty… It feels a little odd. Is Madam Sharon narcissistic? *Klein gulped silently and retracted his gaze. He started to search for possible evidence of her crimes.

Following Leonard's and Frye's instructions, he kept his black gloves on as he searched. He had to keep the original position of everything in his memory to facilitate putting everything back after he was done.

This proved easy for an advanced Seer. If he forgot, he could use dream divination to recall the placement easily.

Of course, he had performed a divination before he left the house tonight. There was going to be no danger and he would be met with relative success.

*That's something a good charlatan would do… even if I'm already a Clown… *Klein lampooned himself. He spent twenty minutes searching Madam Sharon's room, but he didn't find anything noteworthy, nor did he see any light emitted by spirituality.

Finally, he stopped before a safe in the corner of the room.

The steel safe was a meter tall; thick and heavy. It gave the impression that it was unusually sturdy, as if it could only be opened using explosives.

*This sure is a characteristic of the Age of Steam. There must be complicated machinery within the safe… *Klein tried to open the safe but failed miserably.

He left the safe for last. He took off his left glove and unwound the topaz dangling on his left wrist.

Grabbing the silver chain and allowing the pendulum to fall, Klein dispelled the excitement that the fragrance in the room gave him and entered a state of Cogitation.

His eyes turned dark as he chanted to himself, "There is a secret room or hidden partition in this room.

"There is a secret room or hidden partition in this room."

…

After reciting it seven times, Klein's eyes regained their normal color. He looked at the dangling topaz, which was turning counterclockwise.

It was a negative result.

Klein nodded slightly and left Madam Sharon's room. According to the process from before, he went through the study, the living room, the greenhouse, and other parts of the house, but he didn't find any clues of value.

He didn't use Dowsing Rod Seeking since he didn't exactly know what he was looking for.

Klein took out his silver pocket watch and gave it a look. He confirmed the time before returning to Madam Sharon's bedroom.

Carefully closing the wooden door, Klein took out the silver dagger used for rituals and released his spirituality, allowing it to fuse with the powers of nature and seal the room.

He was going to summon himself!

He was going to go through the safe using his spirit and check the things inside!

Grandpa doesn't need to know how to lockpick! Klein proclaimed in Mandarin.

The process was simple since he was praying to himself. He didn't have to be too particular. Klein took out a candle infused with sandalwood and ignited it using his spirituality. That was going to be his altar.

"I!

"I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

The incantation reverberated around Madam Sharon's bedroom. Klein's spirituality poured out from within him, gently fusing with the candle flame to become a gray, palm-sized veil of light.

He then took four steps counterclockwise, made his way through the mad ravings, and into the world above the gray fog.

He saw the Door of Summoning appear behind the seat of honor at the ancient long table. Klein was about to react when he froze.

I should perform a divination to see if I can discover any clues since I'm already here. Here, as well as removing any interference, my powers are also significantly boosted… Also, because of where I am now, performing a divination is akin to using an object Madam Sharon brings around with her everyday… He sat down and conjured a fountain pen and goatskin.

What should I divine? Klein slipped into deep thought*.*

Is there anything wrong with Madam Sharon?

No, everyone makes mistakes, there would be something wrong with anyone.

Is Madam Sharon involved in a crime?

… No, that's not narrow enough either. As a famous socialite tied to the political sphere, it's natural that she would be associated with something dirty yet cannot be convicted for… Also, what is the definition of a crime anyway? The laws of the Loen Kingdom, or the laws of the Intis Republic, or is it up to me to decide?

…

Despite his many thoughts, Klein didn't want to delay it any further. After all, his physical body was still in the real world. Thus, he decided to confirm the past few divinations he did regarding the incident.

He picked up the pen and, without writing, he conjured a divination statement on the goatskin before him

"John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences."

This was the divination he did when he went to Maynard's house to help the police. The answer he received last time was negative.

Grabbing the silver chain, he allowed the topaz pendulum to almost touch the statement on the goatskin. Klein half-closed his eyes and silently recited the divination statement, "John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences.

"John Maynard's death was due to supernatural influences."

…

After repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and looked at the pendulum. His pupils constricted suddenly.

The topaz pendulum was spinning clockwise!

Clockwise meant a positive result!

Maynard's death was really due to supernatural influences!

Klein stared at the pendulum that was slowing down, his heart churning in turmoil.

My divination back then was influenced, disrupted…

Madam Sharon is a Beyonder, a rather powerful Beyonder? Or is there someone backing her, having helped in planning Maynard's death?

Did they want to remove a powerful opponent to the seat of mayor, to remove a future House of Commons Member of Parliament from the New Party?

Many thoughts raced through his mind as Klein wrote a new divination statement: "Madam Sharon is a Beyonder."

He recited the statement seven times, still using the pendulum technique. Klein used the location he was at, as well as the information he knew regarding Madam Sharon, to complete the divination. He saw an answer.

The answer was the clockwise rotation of the topaz pendulum: the answer was yes!

Madam Sharon is a Beyonder… Klein's nerves tensed. He didn't delay any further, immediately answering his own prayer and pushing open the mysterious door.

After a moment of chaos and dizziness, he saw Madam Sharon's bedroom and himself.

Klein floated to the front of the heavy safe and extended his right hand. He carefully extended his hand into the safe.

Since Madam Sharon was a Beyonder, he had to be wary of traps in the safe.

In such a state, where his soul was infused with powers of the mysterious space and his spirituality, Klein no longer needed divination. He would receive a warning when he was approaching something dangerous—a large portion of divination was obtaining revelations by allowing one's Astral Projection to roam in the spirit world. In other words, it was derived from one's spirituality.

Klein didn't notice anything unusual. when his nearly-transparent hand made it through the thick metal door.

After sweeping his hand, he leaned forward, plunging his entire spirit into the safe.

He saw that the inside of the safe was split into three sections. The first was filled with gold bars, thick stacks of cash, and even more precious jewelry. Another layer had sealed documents. Klein blew on them, but he didn't manage to flip them open to look at their contents.

*Yes, I'll have to try again with Mr. Azik's copper whistle… *Klein had experimented with it previously. When he enveloped the Flaring Sun Charm or Azik's copper whistle with his spirit, both the items were able to make it through obstacles, as if becoming illusory items themselves.

The bottom-most layer of the safe was rather strange. There was only a black and white photo there. On the photo was a suave young man.

Madam Sharon's past lover? Were they forcefully broken apart, and Madam Sharon having no choice but to marry the old baron and, thus, embarked on her path of debauchery by entering the beds of multiple men? But deep in her heart, she still harbors a pure space. Every night, when it's quiet, she takes out this photo and strokes it with tears on her face… Klein instantly imagined the plot of a great romantic tragedy.

But the more he looked at it, the more something seemed amiss. The young man in the photo seemed, perhaps, a little too much like Madam Sharon…

*Madam Sharon's brother? She's a Beyonder… F**k, could she also be of the Demoness pathway? The same as Instigator Trissy!* Klein suddenly had a stroke of inspiration which scared himself.

Could the reason Trissy stayed in Tingen this long be because her partner was here? Klein observed the photo closely, realizing that the young man looked remarkably like Madam Sharon.

His nearly-transparent face grimaced in pain. He could no longer view that "porno" the same way as before!

Collecting himself, Klein felt for the corners of the safe to see if they hid anything.

Even though he couldn't pick up any papers in his current state, passing through objects was a different feeling from passing through the air. The feeling was also different when passing through objects of different densities.

In his search, Klein suddenly froze.

He found an empty space on the side of the safe facing the wall—a hidden compartment!

After confirming that there was no danger, Klein made his way inside. What entered his field of vision were ointments, fragrances, powdered herbs, and other objects. The centerpiece was a statue of a god that took the form of a skeleton.

The statue was about the size of a palm, and probably of a beautiful girl. It had long hair all the way to its heels, each strand of hair was thick and clear, like a venomous snake.

Situated at the tip of every strand of hair was an eye—some closed, others open.

Klein was shocked. He caught a whiff of an evil scent and hurried out of the hidden compartment.

He now understood why his divination for any secret rooms or partitions in the room had failed!

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CHAPTER 196
SPIRIT MEDIUM MIRROR

Klein rushed out of the heavy safe in retreat. Only when he realized that everything seemed fine did he calm down.

That white bone statue is creepy… Although it isn't dangerous, it gives me the creeps… Could it be the so-called Primordial Demoness? An evil god like the Hidden Sage, the Dark Side of the Universe, or the True Creator? Klein recalled his hunches about Madam Sharon, and he suddenly understood what existence the white bone statue might represent.

Just as he thought, his spirituality stirred as an ominous premonition gripped him.

Klein quickly flew next to the window with complicated patterns and looked at the road outside. He saw a carriage driving towards the front gate under the light of the gas street lamps.

*Madam Sharon is back? *There was a tug at his heartstrings as he finally understood the source of his ominous premonition.

Taking into consideration that Trissy only became a woman after Sequence 8 Instigator, Madam Sharon was most likely a Sequence 7. And since Madam Sharon has been active in Tingen's social circles for many years, she was most likely much stronger than Trissy. Klein didn't dare to take the risk of relying on his Flaring Sun Charm and Azik's copper whistle. Instead, he made the wise decision to leave.

He had a limited number of charms. Plus, he didn't know when he would be able to get the Sealed Artifact, Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem, out again.

Hence, if it wasn't a desperate situation, Klein didn't want to waste his most powerful charms. He would also have the issue of explaining himself if he were to use it.

I can't just tell Dunn that a kind expert had happened to pass by and helped me, right?

As for why he didn't want to use Azik's copper whistle, it was because Klein wasn't sure if the messenger, that was summoned, had the ability to fight. What if it just looked strong but only knew how to send letters?

*With what I discovered earlier, it should be sufficient for the Nighthawks Squad to take action. Why should I fight against Madam Sharon alone? We can totally gank her! *Klein emphasized inwardly and ended his summoning. With a whoosh, he returned to the world above the gray fog. He then quickly wrapped himself in spirituality and stimulated a rapid descent to return to his body in reality.

He quickly put out the flame and put away the candle. He removed the wall of spirituality and left Madam Sharon's bedroom. He took the same path back, but he didn't have the time to reset the bolt on the balcony door.

Sliding down the water pipe, Klein climbed over the wall which was opposite the entrance of the house. He remained hidden until he reached the neighboring street. Then, he hired the expensive night carriage to Zouteland Street.

…

Madam Sharon, who looked beautiful in her black dress, slowly walked to the second floor. She dismissed her maidservants and opened the door to her bedroom.

Her pure clear eyes suddenly concentrated and reflected fine threads that were almost transparent and unnoticeable. They didn't possess the luster of spirituality; they were like human hair that was pathologically changed. If

one didn't already know of their existence or have a pair of very special eyes, they wouldn't notice the strands.

All those fine threads had torn and fallen to the ground.

Madam Sharon squinted her eyes and directed her focus onto the thick gray metal safe.

…

36 Zouteland Street, the Blackthorn Security Company.

Dunn was reading the newspaper casually with his legs crossed. He looked at Klein who appeared before his office door with a strange expression. He sighed and said, "Weren't you supposed to slip into Madam Sharon's house to do an initial search? … Did you encounter some sort of problem?"

Klein nodded seriously and said, "Yes, I suspect that Madam Sharon is a member of the Demoness Sect."

"A member of the Demoness Sect?" Dunn lowered the newspaper and ruminated over the words. He then asked seriously, "What did you discover?"

Klein didn't sit down, he leaned his body forward and supported his weight with his hands holding the edge of the work desk.

"First, I found a photo. There was a young man in the photo, but he looked very much like Madam Sharon."

If he were to change into female clothing, put on makeup, and Photoshop the picture a little, he would look exactly like Madam Sharon.… Klein held back his urge to lampoon.

"Similar to Instigator Trissy?" Dunn's eyes sparkled as he was enlightened.

They had previously predicted that Trissy was most likely a member of the Demoness Sect.

"Yes." Klein nodded with mixed emotions as he continued, "I used divination to discover that Madam Sharon has a white bone statue in a hidden compartment in her safe. It's of an extremely beautiful woman, but her hair is very long, to her ankles. Every single strand is as thick as a venomous snake. On the tips, there were eyes. They looked rather creepy. Captain, is that the image of the Primordial Demoness?"

As his security clearance was insufficient, the information about the Demoness Sect that he could read was very limited.

Dunn recalled and nodded with a serious expression and said, "That's the image of the Primordial Demoness.

We have to take action immediately and seize control of Madam Sharon."

Klein immediately agreed and said, "If Madam Sharon is a Mid-Sequence Beyonder from the Demoness Sect, I have to assume that she'll be able to tell that someone had sneaked into her bedroom."

Then, he suddenly felt puzzled as he blurted, "Captain, why do the seven orthodox gods only have symbols without any actual image, while the evil gods that I'm currently aware of have anthropomorphic appearances? The True Creator and the Primordial Demoness are examples. Is this one of the differences between orthodox gods and evil gods?"

Why would there be such a difference? Klein added inwardly, but he wisely didn't say it out.

"That's one of the differences between orthodox gods and evil gods." Dunn gave a reassuring answer. Then, he got up and walked towards the clothes rack. He said, "Let's not delay any further, I'm worried that Madam Sharon will run away."

Then, Dunn paused.

"Go upstairs to get Kenley. With the three of us taking action together, we can apply for one Sealed Artifact. Madam Sharon is very likely higher than a Sequence 7 Beyonder."

Captain, you're so wise! Klein answered without hesitation, "Alright."

Then, he asked curiously, "Captain, which Sealed Artifact are you going to use?"

Dunn weighed his words before he answered, "3-0217."

As there weren't many Sealed Artifacts behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate, Klein quickly remembered what Captain wanted to use.

"Number: 0217.

"Name: Spirit Medium's Mirror.

"Danger Grade: 3. Considerably dangerous. It has to be used carefully. It can only be requested for operations that require three or more people.

"Security classification: Official Nighthawk member or above.

"Sealed Method: Store in absolute darkness.

"Description: The back of the mirror is plated in mercury, the front of the mirror has three minor cracks.

"The very first investigator that looked into the mirror saw a sobbing girl with long hair. Then, he discovered the girl climbing out of the mirror.

"From many experiments with the artifact, the image that's reflected in the mirror is different most of the time. Even if the same person uses it repeatedly, they would encounter different things of varying danger levels.

But they would prioritize dealing with the person who looked at the mirror first.

"The most dangerous situation is to see oneself in the mirror.

"If no one looks at the mirror, under the prerequisite of there being light, an image would surface automatically every three hours.

"It doesn't possess any living traits.

"Remark: The mirror originally belonged to a Spirit Medium and was a very ordinary mirror until one day the Spirit Medium committed suicide when looking into it."

Indeed, that there aren't many Sealed Artifacts behind Chanis Gate that can be used in a Beyonder battle. 3-0217 is a good choice… Klein didn't speak further as he immediately ran to the Nighthawks' recreation room to get Sleepless Kenley.

That night was Royale's turn to be on duty at Chanis Gate. Leonard was off duty, Seeka Tron was patrolling areas like Raphael Cemetery, and the new member would only arrive on Sunday. Hence, Dunn could only pick from Frye and Kenley. Taking into consideration that Madam Sharon was from the Demoness Sect and had little to do with dead spirits, he had opted for the latter.

After a few minutes, Dunn returned from the basement. He held the mirror that was tightly wrapped in a thick black cloth.

Frankly speaking, if I didn't know beforehand, I wouldn't be able to tell that it's a mirror. None of it is exposed… Klein went forward with the petite-sized Kenley.

"You're in charge of using Sealed Artifact 3-0217." Dunn passed the mirror to Kenley.

Upon seeing that, Klein suddenly realized that he was a Sequence 8 Beyonder and that he possessed the ability to fight head on. He couldn't just hide by the side as support.

Man, I'm a little nervous… He touched the Slumber Charms in his pockets and made sure that he was well prepared.

*The only problem is that in order to make it easier to climb, I'm not bringing my cane. Hmm, I can borrow Kenley's. He has the mirror in one hand and a gun in the other; that should be sufficient. *Amidst Klein's thoughts, the trio arrived downstairs and took a carriage to Osna Street.

On their way there, Kenley looked at the Sealed Artifact 3-0217 in his hands. He sighed from the tension.

"This is the first time I've been involved in such a dangerous operation."

Normally, the Nighthawks wouldn't use any Sealed Artifacts to deal with Beyonder incidents.

When they went to Morse Town, they had applied for the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem for preventive purposes. Given how far away Morse Town was, it would've taken backup some time to arrive if they needed it. This time, they were almost certain that their target was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder!

"Don't worry, perhaps Madam Sharon has already fled," Klein replied with a smile.

Honestly, he was just as tense as Kenley.

Dunn's eyes turned and looked at him helplessly.

"Let's try not to let Madam Sharon escape."

…

About twenty minutes later, the three Nighthawks arrived at Osna Street. They saw the garden and Madam Sharon's house in the darkness. The house lay in silence as though nothing had happened.

Klein took out the pendulum in his left sleeve and made a quick divination.

"There's danger inside.

"There's danger inside."

…

After he recited the statement seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant spinning clockwise. The amplitude and speed were considered medium-level.

It meant that there was danger in there. Not very high, but it wasn't very low either!

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CHAPTER 197
OPERATION

There's danger in there. Not very high, but it isn't very low either…

This means that Madam Sharon is still in the building. She hasn't fled yet…

Klein froze for a moment, quickly realizing the reason.

He had entered a unique state by summoning himself to inspect the safe. He hadn't forcefully broken the lock when he was inspecting the secret compartment, nor did he activate any hidden traps. Thus, Madam Sharon wouldn't have discovered that her secret had been exposed. She would only think that there was a break in, or some private investigator was checking on her to no avail.

In such a situation, it was logical that she would continue to stay home. It made logical sense.

To lose composure from a tiny matter and overreact wasn't the Madam Sharon whom Klein had come to understand. She was a calm socialite who was capable of acting afraid and pitiful, as well as a Beyonder member of the Demoness Sect who had kept her identity hidden for many years.

*If the telephone had been invented, Madam Sharon definitely would've called one of her lovers and complained about the security in Tingen City whilst hinting that it was Madam Maynard… *Klein began imagining a melodramatic plot. He told Dunn and Kenley the results of his divination as well as his guess.

"That's the most reasonable deduction." Dunn pressed down on his hat as he looked at the second floor of Madam Sharon's apartment. "There's no need for us to rush in."

"Why?" Kenley, who was holding Sealed Artifact 3-0217, instinctively asked.

He was filled with fear towards the Spirit Medium Mirror in his hands. He was afraid that some unexpected event would arise from the Sealed Artifact.

Dunn wore his black gloves and looked at Klein.

"Do you still remember what happened when we tried to capture Instigator Trissy?"

"I remember," Klein replied after some thought. "She seemed to be able to detect our presence and make the necessary responses, which resulted in her successful escape."

I also remember suggesting the use of bombarding the house when the Captain asked me how I would deal with the situation. That was the safest, most surefire method. But not this time… We can't use it here as there are many innocent maids in Madam Sharon's house. If we notified them in advance and got them to evacuate, that would definitely catch Madam Sharon's attention. According to Leonard, Trissy could turn invisible. We have to assume that Madam Sharon has that ability too… Klein connected the dots at once.

Dunn looked at the crimson moon in the sky and said, "Good, your answer is very good. You're rather intuitive in such situations.

"We cannot approach recklessly and end up alarming Madam Sharon. I'll try dragging her into a dream from a distance. If I'm successful, you and Kenley will go and capture her… Well… You can make the decision of whether to kill her or not. Kill her if you cannot control her. Your safety is of utmost importance."

Captain, your line of thought is always so clear at such critical moments! I was just waiting for you to say that! Klein praised in his heart.

Over the months, Klein had grasped most of the unique traits of the different Beyonder powers of his partners when he was casually chatting with Dunn, Leonard, Frye, and the rest. Amongst those, Dunn Smith, who was a Nightmare, could freely enter the dreams of a sleeping person even though he was at home or at the Blackthorn Security Company.

But how he did it was a secret of his own Sequence, and Klein didn't ask about it too deeply.

The ability to drag someone into a dream had a limited range and was normally used during direct confrontations.

But Klein had once heard the Captain say that the ability also had a certain effect when used within a hundred meter radius. But he needed time to complete the process. He couldn't do it instantly, for the process was similar to coaxing a child to sleep.

At this moment, Dunn was going to drag the distant Madam Sharon into a sleeping state, a little at a time. After completing the first stages of the restraint, he was going to create the most opportunistic conditions for Klein and Kenley.

"Alright." Kenley was also rather accepting of the Captain's plan.

Without any more chatter, Dunn leaned on the corner of a wall and shut his eyes. He put his hands together and lowered his head. His black windbreaker and silk hat blended into the night.

…

In the opulent bedroom.

Madam Sharon was leaning on her comfortable rocking chair, completely naked. Her fair and excellent figure was completely exposed.

She sometimes turned her head towards the full-length mirror to admire her charming self.

As she looked, her face would flush red as tears welled in her eyes. Her expression emitted a strange tenderness amidst her stupor.

The skeletal statue of the goddess was sitting on the table beside her. The thick strands of hair seemed gentle under the warm, pink light.

Slowly, the frequency in which Madam Sharon looked into the mirror decreased. Bit by bit, her eyelids couldn't help but droop.

…

Seconds turned into minutes when Klein suddenly recalled something. *How was the Captain going to notify Kenley and himself after he successfully dragged Madam Sharon into a dream?*

Madam Sharon would wake up if the Captain left his Nightmare state, and she would notice that something was off… I wonder if the Captain is capable of giving hand signs while dreaming at the same time? Klein looked at the worried Kenley pacing around and intended to discuss this with him in order to distract him.

At that moment, his mind turned into a blur. He saw a giant crimson moon, as well as Captain Dunn Smith in his black windbreaker under the moon. There was also the short Kenley, his expression dazed.

Klein realized that he too was dreaming!

I've been dragged into a dream by the Captain… So that's how he was going to notify us. He wanted to facepalm himself, but could only maintain his trance-like state while saying muddle-headedly, "Captain?"

Dunn nodded slightly and said, "Madam Sharon has entered a dream. You can take action now."

He then emphasized, "Remember to be careful, and don't be too reckless… We would rather miss the opportunity than take unwarranted risks."

Just as he finished his sentence, the world before Klein shattered. His eyes reflected Dunn Smith again. He was still at the corner of the wall, looking down with his hands clenched tightly into fists.

On the other side, Kenley, who had stopped pacing about, also opened his eyes.

The duo exchanged looks and nodded. Both of them entered a state to execute their operation.

Even though this was the first time Kenley was participating in a relatively dangerous mission, he was still more experienced than Klein. He had attended many official missions, so he quickly adjusted his mental state, becoming calm and sharp.

Of course, this could also be attributed to the augmentation the night had on a Sleepless. This was also one of the reasons Dunn had chosen Kenley over Frye for this operation.

"Let's go." As a Sequence 8, Klein took on the role of the leader, signaling for his partner to follow.

Kenley didn't object. He gripped the tightly-wrapped mirror and softened his footsteps as he followed.

Klein led him to the place where he scaled the wall previously. He grabbed onto the crevices of the wall and made it to the top of the wall with little effort.

He maintained his ridiculous sense of balance and turned around, bending down and grabbing the Spirit Medium Mirror Kenley had tossed over.

The moment he touched the mirror, Klein felt his spiritual perception tighten suddenly. It was as if what was covered by the black cloth wasn't a mirror, but a door to some unknown, dangerous alternate world.

Indeed, any item that requires sealing has some malefic side to it… Klein internally muttered to himself wistfully as he watched Kenley scale the wall.

In order to facilitate movement, Kenley had placed his cane beside Dunn. Klein didn't dwell on that matter.

After making their way through the garden to the side of the building, he climbed the pipe up to the balcony of the second floor, just as he did before.

He then hung naturally from his feet, allowing his body to fall, once again taking Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

Kenley looked at him, puzzled. But immediately, he nodded his head in enlightenment.

At that moment, Klein was shocked by his own actions. He exerted a force using his waist, and, with the support of his left hand, he easily flipped over.

What happened just now? Why did I move like that? It felt so natural… Is that an ability of the Clown? He thought back and felt that he was able to better display the unique characteristics of a Clown in actual practice.

After waiting for Kenley to easily make his way up, Klein handed the Spirit Medium Mirror back to him before pulling open the unlocked door of the balcony.

Kenley carefully pulled away the black cloth wrapped around Sealed Artifact 3-0271. He pointed the object mirror side down, reflecting the tiles

on the ground.

One of the rules of the Spirit Medium Mirror was not to use it on yourself or your partners!

After putting away the black cloth, Kenley took out his revolver and followed behind Klein. They made their way past the corridor towards Madam Sharon's bedroom, their footsteps light.

Klein wielded his readied revolver, and, while activating his Spirit Vision, he reached out for the door handle with his left hand.

He didn't dare to be careless since his divination told him that there would be danger present.

The reason why he didn't make another quick divination was that he knew the presence of the Primordial Demoness's statue in the room. At this distance, his divination would definitely be interrupted. He knew that there was no way for him to get a clear answer without relying on the gray fog's obstruction. Furthermore, with Kenley beside him, there was no way for him to enter that mysterious space.

After pushing open the door, what entered Klein and Kenley's field of vision was the warm light from the gas lamp.

Then, they saw Madam Sharon slumped over her chair, as well as her alluring body.

However, Madam Sharon wasn't asleep. She was reclined in her chair with a faint smile across her mouth, looking straight at her two visitors.

Instinctively, Kenley flipped his palm and pointed the Spirit Medium Mirror at Madam Sharon.

Klein first froze, then exclaimed, "No!"

He clearly remembered that there was a full-length mirror on the other side of the chair. But it wasn't there now!

The Spirit Medium Mirror had locked onto Madam Sharon in just a second.

But that image of Madam Sharon became blurry before turning into a full-length mirror.

Kenley looked at himself in the mirror and also Sealed Artifact 3-0271 reflecting his own image.

A figure instantly appeared within the Spirit Medium Mirror. It was an expressionless, sinister image of Kenley himself!

Klein felt his limbs turn rigid as if he had been entangled by invisible threads.

An elegant figure appeared beside the full-length mirror. It was Madam Sharon, wearing a nightgown.

She glanced at the two intruders and chuckled.

"If it wasn't for the fact that the statue happened to be beside me, I should be deep asleep now, waiting for you to wake me up with a kiss."

At that moment, Klein suddenly shouted a simple term in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

He had no idea when he dug his left palm into his pocket. He deftly flicked his fingers and tossed out a Slumber Charm.

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CHAPTER 198
APPROPRIATING UNIQUENESS

The silver charm suddenly turned ice-cold, just like a crystal coat with layers of frost.

Klein shivered and suddenly became more alert, his fear and agitation temporarily froze.

He quickly injected his spirituality into the charm and pushed the thin silver piece out of his pocket with his fingertip, causing it to drop to his feet.

A crimson flame appeared in the air, and the sound of light, continuous explosions echoed in the room.

A serene and deep feeling instantly emanated and engulfed most of the bedroom, including Madam Sharon, Sleepless Kenley, and also Klein himself!

The Slumber Charm was an item that didn't distinguish between the enemy and the caster. In most situations, using it meant throwing it at the enemy.

That way, the caster would only be affected by the remnant shock waves, but not to the extent of failing to resist the temptation of falling into a deep sleep.

But Klein's arms were entangled by countless invisible threads. He couldn't throw the charm, so he could only exchange Madam Sharon's slumber with his!

But he had long considered such a situation and was prepared. This was because his body was unique—a uniqueness that was unlike most Low-Sequence Beyonders.

In that instant, Klein's eyelids closed and entered into deep sleep normally, while Madam Sharon and Kenley also appeared to slow down.

Klein quickly realized that he was in a dream and rationally knew that he was sleeping.

Whenever anything related to dream invasions or similar hypnotic effects were used on him, he could still maintain consciousness!

He had discovered this when he was dealing with Dunn's Nightmare powers, as well as when Daly was channeling his spirit!

Kacha!

Klein tore out of the dream forcefully and woke up. He felt the countless threads binding his arms, legs, and body loosen. As for Madam Sharon, she had a vacant look, as though she was going to shake off the effect of the Slumber Charm but had yet to wake up entirely. Kenley was on the ground with the Spirit Medium Mirror flipped upside down nearby, while his revolver had been flung to the door.

An opportunity!

Klein seized the moment while the fine threads loosened, he took out his left hand and snapped his fingers. He lit up a faint blue spiritual flame and burned the countless fine threads before him.

At the same time, he picked up his revolver with his right hand and pulled the trigger repeatedly.

Bang! Bang!

The two silver demon hunting bullets tore through the barrel and fired towards Madam Sharon.

Klein didn't confirm the outcome but bent his knees, exerted strength in his waist, and leaped over to Kenley. Simultaneously, he broke the fine strings that were tied around his body.

His earlier shots were mainly to inform the Captain that something unexpected had happened inside. They were already fighting and were in need of assistance. Of course, if he could shoot Madam Sharon directly, that'd be the best outcome!

However, Klein didn't believe a Sequence 7 or 6 Beyonder could be taken care of so easily.

There were faint blue flames twirling in the air, dancing across the fines threads in the room. In such a dreamy scenery, the two silver demon hunting bullets struck Madam Sharon's body.

Kacha! Kacha!

Madam Sharon was in her translucent sleeping robe, and her indistinct body shattered like the crimson moon's reflection in a lake. The full body mirror next to her cracked into pieces, and most of them shattered into about thumbnail-sized chunks while a small amount remained on the frame. They all resembled palms, strangely-shaped palms.

*A substitute? A Beyonder power of the Demoness Sequence? *The corner of Klein's eyes swept over it as he already rolled next to Kenley. Since the fine strings were all broken by his movement, the faint blue flames didn't spread over.

At that moment, Madam Sharon had vanished, but the "sleeping" Kenley lifted his hands and gripped his neck so tightly that his saliva began flowing out as his tongue protruded. But he didn't seem like he was going to stop.

But in Klein's Spirit Vision, there weren't any abnormal things around!

He suddenly recalled the description of Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

The most dangerous situation is when you see yourself!

Could it be that Kenley saw his own reflection in Sealed Artifact 3-0271 through the full body mirror? Klein speculated. He quickly took out another silver charm without having the luxury of time to think about it.

It was a triangular-shaped item: a Requiem Charm.

"Crimson!"

Klein said the ancient Hermes word while he instilled his spirituality into the charm and threw it out.

Then, he pressed down his left hand and grabbed the Spirit Medium Mirror.

He used the corner of his eye to determine that the Sealed Artifact was facing downward so it wouldn't reflect himself.

The triangular silver charm ignited into icy-blue flames. The gentle and serene darkness blanketed Kenley and affected Klein himself.

The nervous emotions dispersed in that instant. Kenley relaxed his hands on his throat, while Klein felt like he was standing before his oriel window at home, overlooking the quiet streets. His physical and mental state was at peace.

That was exactly what Klein wanted!

At that very moment, he entered an extremely serene state. He appeared to be the only person left in the entire world with nothing else in existence.

Within this sense of calmness, he suddenly had a gut feeling in his mind.

Madam Sharon is about to attack my right waist!

That was the foresight ability of a Clown in battle. Without any hesitation, Klein lifted the Spirit Medium Mirror and rolled to his left.

Just as he moved, a dagger, burning in dark flames, pierced the spot where he had stood earlier.

Madam Sharon's figure was outlined once again.

As he rolled, Klein suddenly lifted the Spirit Medium Mirror and pointed it at Madam Sharon!

Besides saving his teammate, his main goal when he got close to Kenley was to pick up the Sealed Artifact.

Otherwise, he didn't believe that anything good would come out of waiting for the Captain's reinforcements while being next to Madam Sharon. The Flaring Sun Charm could be used to fight against a Beyonder, but the effect wouldn't be as significant as if it was used against a dead spirit. Plus, the other person wouldn't just stand there and wait for him to use a charm.

If it really didn't work, Klein could only take the risk and use Azik's copper whistle.

Regarding how he would explain it, he would think about it after he managed to stay alive!

However, things developed better than Klein had predicted. Madam Sharon opted for assassination. She didn't interrupt his use of the Requiem Charm and the Spirit Medium Mirror.

Therefore, Klein had instantly formulated a simple plan. He didn't avoid the repercussions of the Requiem Charm but relied on it to enhance his foresight ability as a Clown. Then, he seized the opportunity to dodge the attack while he used the Spirit Medium Mirror to reflect the enemy!

When Madam Sharon missed her strike, she immediately wanted to chase after her agile opponent who was rolling away. She suddenly saw a mirror with three cracks.

The surface of the mirror rippled, and a woman's figure appeared. Her hair was black and thick, hanging low and blocking her face.

Klein's left hand shook, and the Spirit Medium Mirror glided on the carpet for a dozen centimeters with the front facing upwards.

A pale hand extended out of the mirror, and a woman in a white bedsheet-like dress climbed out of the mirror quickly and pounced at Madam Sharon.

Madam Sharon's expression became gloomy, there was a layer of darkness above her innocent brown eyes.

Her surroundings ignited with seven black flames.

With a swoosh, a black flame flew out and hit the woman in the white dress.

Whoosh!

The woman caught on fire and wailed in pain. Very soon, she vanished into thin air.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The black flames flew at Klein one after another like bullets.

Klein's pupils constricted as he quickly rolled away. He didn't dare stay in that spot.

However, his action of rolling gradually became slower because there seemed to be fine threads entangling him again. They slowed him down and affected his motion.

It seemed like the nemesis of the Clown's combat abilities!

The black flames flew past Klein's face and fell onto Madam Sharon's bed. However, it didn't burn, seemingly effective on items with life or spirituality.

Klein had yet to feel rejoice over his successful dodge when another premonition flashed through his head.

He twisted his spine and changed his forward flip into a side roll.

A transparent ice crystal suddenly appeared like a spear and stabbed into the carpet where Klein had originally intended to land.

The white frost expanded and struck Klein whose actions were affected by the fine threads.

He suddenly shivered, and his body became stiff. Although he could still move, he was much slower.

Madam Sharon had black flames surrounding her again, and there was a transparent ice spear that condensed in her hands. Klein didn't hesitate any further as he shoved his hand into his pocket and grabbed Azik's copper whistle.

He, he, he.

Just then, Kenley shook off the effect of the Requiem and Slumber charms. He got up and looked towards Madam Sharon with a pair of vacant-looking eyes.

His face seemed to be blanketed by a shadow, making him look silent yet creepy.

Thud. Thud. Thud. Kenley leaped at Madam Sharon who was the closest.

Madam Sharon narrowed her eyes and shot the black flames surrounding her one after another at Kenley.

*Poof! Poof Poof! *The black flames disappeared like snowflakes and didn't have any effect.

Klein was stunned at first, then he lifted the gun in his right hand and pulled the trigger while aiming at Madam Sharon.

Bang!

Madam Sharon dodged ahead of time and threw the frost spear towards Kenley, but it only penetrated his clothes and not his skin. Hence, it didn't create a freezing effect.

Bang! Klein fired again, and Madam Sharon dodged to the side of the broken full-body mirror and picked up a palm-sized fragment.

She continued to walk swiftly and dodged another bullet. She then used the irregular fragment to reflect Kenley as he leaped over at her.

Right on the heels of that, Madam Sharon dodged to the side as she swiped the mirror with her palm which was covered in black flames.

At that moment, Klein had emptied his revolver. He had no choice but to throw it, letting the empty shells and revolver fall to the carpet.

Just as he rolled over to pick up Kenley's revolver, he heard his teammate's tragic scream.

Kenley stopped before bending over and vomiting. It was bile at first, then a red heart, followed by his lungs and stomach that were burning with black flames.

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CHAPTER 199
SUCCESSFUL TOSS OF THE DIE

The beating heart, the yellowish-green liquid, the silently burning black flames, and the falling figure entered Klein's field of vision and etched themselves deeply into Klein's mind.

The most dangerous mission he had encountered up to this date had been when he was dealing with Ray Bieber who was in the midst of digesting. Even such a terrifying and dangerous monster had only resulted in severe injuries to the Beyonders on the mission. No one had to sacrifice their lives.

The deaths of the Beyonders Klein had witnessed, including Old Neil's, were all due to them losing control. The "murderer" might be strange and indescribable or related to evil gods, but they had nothing to do with the missions they undertook.

Now, he was looking at one of his partners being killed in action. The death was purely due to one mistake.

Nighthawks were fighting against madness, but so were they also fighting against danger.

There might never be an opportunity to make up for that one mistake.

Klein's thoughts erupted with a boom.

Apparently having taken a huge blow, he knelt down and lifted his right hand, firing successive shots at Madam Sharon. The silver demon hunting bullets pierced through the invisible threads and shot towards her head and transparent sleeping gown.

Suddenly, Madam Sharon appeared to be yanked in another direction by something, allowing her to successfully avoid Klein's manic shooting.

Klein only managed to collect himself and regain the ability of rational thought when he finished firing the five bullets in his revolver, and the sound of the hammer striking an empty chamber entered his ears.

His heart tightened. Without any time to reload, he tossed the revolver to the side and took out a stack of tarot cards!

Pa!

Madam Sharon's body moved to the side and saw a card fly past her, piercing deeply into the surface of the makeup table.

She smiled, her beautiful brown eyes once again taking on a black luster.

At that moment, her waterfall like brown hair suddenly flailed into the air like it was lifted by an invisible force.

Madam Sharon froze. She wanted to dodge, but she was too slow. Klein had tossed out a "Magician" card, successfully pinning her hair to the wall.

Pa! Madam Sharon forcefully tore away her hair and rolled forward, her body quickly vanishing from Klein's line of sight.

She's turned invisible again… Klein had a tarot card between his fingers as he slowly turned around while being alert of his surroundings.

Suddenly, he realized why Madam Sharon had to give up her attack, and why she had slowed down.

If the situation had developed normally, Klein would have had no choice but to use Azik's copper whistle to deal with this terrifying demoness!

Yes! The Captain must be around here somewhere! He felt a little excited. He looked around, his gaze instinctively falling on the window.

At the same time, he made a judgment in his heart.

Madam Sharon wants to flee!

She knew that we still have a partner with the ability to drag her into a dream, but she was unsure if there would be other reinforcements from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind!

Even though she's powerful, there's no way that she can wipe out a team of Beyonders on her own!

With that thought, Klein flicked his wrist, tossing the tarot card towards the window.

Whoosh Whoosh Whoosh! He threw out five cards in succession, three sealing the window and the other two towards the door.

Crack! Thud! Thud!

Amidst the sound of shattering glass, two tarot cards dug into the ajar bedroom door, one after the other. As he expected, Klein heard the sound of dodging.

He once again tossed cards out, making use of his Clown's intuition to pinpoint where he should be aiming.

The cards pierced through the air and rapidly advanced before drilling themselves into the sturdy wall. However, a figure was quickly outlined in the air. It was none other than the brown-haired Madam Sharon who was in a translucent sleeping gown.

The moment Madam Sharon was exposed, her eyes lost their focus, as though she was falling asleep standing.

Captain… Klein scanned his surroundings but was in no hurry to throw his cards. This was because he knew that Madam Sharon would quickly break out of the dream. He had to deal fatal damage in these two or three seconds, or their opponent would escape.

It was easy to escape from a Nightmare when there was a huge distance between them!

Bending his knees, Klein rolled forward diagonally. He went prone and extended his right hand, grabbing the edge of the Spirit Medium Mirror that was facing upward.

He then flicked his wrist before his reflection could appear in the mirror. He tossed Sealed Artifact 3-0271 towards Madam Sharon, mirror side facing her.

Madam Sharon's body trembled. The color of her brown eyes was quickly restored as they once again found their focus.

And awakening before her was a crystalline layer of sturdy frost that appeared on the surface of her body.

However, she didn't see the card, nor the demon hunting bullet approaching her. All she saw was a mirror, and that the mirror was reflecting her innocent, yet alluring beauty.

That beautiful face in the mirror suddenly became contorted. Wrinkles, gashes of blood, and rotting spots appeared on her face.

"No!" Madam Sharon let out a shrill cry as if she had just witnessed someone she loved die.

Her skin quickly took on a green color as yellow pus flowed out the corner of her eyes.

After a moment of suffering, a silent black flame burned outward from within Madam Sharon, as if she was trying to expel something.

The black flames then condensed into a thick frost, as if it was creating a coffin for an eternal rest.

The invisible threads finally took on a color that was visible to the human eye. They enveloped the frost, forming a gigantic cocoon.

*Thud. Thud. Thud. *Sealed Artifact 3-0271 fell onto the ground and tumbled before stopping beside Madam Sharon's giant cocoon.

At that moment, Dunn broke through the window frame and somersaulted into the room.

He caught sight of Kenley, who had stopped breathing, and his expression sank.

It was at this moment, the cocoon cracked open. The coffin of ice crumbled an inch at a time as black flames turned into specks of light, dissipating into the surroundings.

Madam Sharon's skin had regained its normal color. Her eyes showed fatigue, but she seemed normal.

Her eyes reflected Klein who was still sprawled on the ground. She also saw Dunn Smith, his finger pressed on his glabella with his eyes closed.

A formless ripple spread outward from Dunn as Madam Sharon's eyelids drooped uncontrollably. Under Dunn's windbreaker were writhing, snake-like objects.

Klein knew that the Captain couldn't restrain Madam Sharon for long, just like when they were previously fighting Monster Bieber. Klein rolled forward again, grabbed his revolver, the one he had previously tossed onto the carpet.

He grabbed three demon hunting bullets with his left hand and familiarity stuffed them into the round chambers.

Pa!

Klein closed the cylinder and stood up, taking aim at Madam Sharon with both hands on the gun. He aimed at the center of her forehead.

Bang!

He controlled his body with the abilities of the Clown and pulled the trigger.

The silver demon hunting bullet pierced through the air, accurately hitting the fixed target.

A bloody gash appeared between Madam Sharon's eyes, but the bullet seemed to tear through multiple layers of obstruction, causing it to lose the bulk of its power, rendering it unable to pierce through the target's skull.

Klein fired another two shots without hesitation when he saw Madam Sharon suddenly open her eyes.

Bang! Bang!

A rain of blood splattered amidst white dots. The stunning beauty that was Madam Sharon had become a mutilated corpse that would incite nightmares in every man.

She had long run out of "substitutes" to use.

Phew. Phew. Klein lowered his arms and panted heavily. Madam Sharon, with only half her head left, slumped onto the ground. She still had an exceptional figure, her skin still white and tender.

Dunn straightened himself up and opened his eyes. He, too, lowered his hand from his glabella, his face a little pale. He wasn't injured, but he looked as though he had lost a lot of blood.

"If it wasn't for the fact that she wanted to kill a few people before she tried to escape; if it wasn't for Sealed Artifact 3-0271 reflecting herself by chance, we probably would've only been able to injure her…" Dunn slowly walked forward to Klein's side, his voice unusually low.

If it wasn't for how unique I was, I would've died along with Kenley in the first ten seconds of the battle… Klein turned to look at Kenley who was silently lying on the black ash. He exhaled.

"Captain, Kenley…"

"I know…" Dunn replied with a raspy voice. "I made a mistake. I was fooled by Madam Sharon. I didn't expect her to secretly escape from the dream."

He paused, then he said in a serious tone, "But you have to get used to this. It's normal for Nighthawks to die during missions. Perhaps the next one to die would be me."

Klein fell silent, not knowing how to reply. Kenley still had his eyes open, staring blankly at the ceiling.

"May the Goddess bless you. May you find true peace." Dunn walked over to Kenley's side and drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He then squatted and closed his partner's eyes.

May the Goddess bless you. May the serene night no longer harbor any danger or madness… Klein also drew the crimson moon as he prayed silently in his heart.

A few seconds later, he forcefully retracted his gaze and asked in a heavy voice, "Captain, should I channel her spirit now?"

Dunn nodded indiscernibly.

"Don't attempt to ask about the Primordial Demoness. That's very dangerous. I'll guard you and prevent any accidents from disturbing you."

Klein didn't tarry. He took out the various ingredients and quickly set up an altar, starting the mediumship ritual.

After reciting the incantations, he took a step back and used a Dream Divination.

"Madam Sharon's partners.

"Madam Sharon's partners."

…

After reciting the statement seven times, Klein entered a dream. He saw Madam Sharon's soul within the hazy world.

He reached out to the transparent, ethereal soul, and the scene before his eyes changed.

It was a night scene. Madam Sharon, who was wearing a long black robe, handed an ancient bronze book over to Instigator Trissy. She laughed a little manically after hearing the latter's doubt over the term "Witch."

"Weren't you always curious? Curious about why our upper echelons are all female…"

*So it really was the Demoness Sect… Leonard's guess accurately matches the truth; he really does have a huge secret… The corresponding Sequence

7 for Assassin and Instigator is Witch? What a trap… *Klein thought to himself.

The scene immediately changed. Klein saw a vast hall with narrow windows all around the place, and a lady clad in a pure white robe.

Her back was facing Madam Sharon as she said with a smile, "We can reach sainthood as long as we advance towards the Primordial. We can attain power, attain salvation, and avoid the end of days."

Madam Sharon lowered her head and asked curiously, "Why must we become women? Is it because the Primordial is a woman? Do women symbolize destruction and calamity?"

The lady whose back was facing Madam Sharon answered calmly, "No, men are the same, they are the synonym of war. These are two similar pathways."

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CHAPTER 200
THE DEMONESS OF PLEASURE

Synonym of war… A similar Sequence as the Demoness Sequence pathway… Which one would it be? Klein watched the movie-like scene as he recalled the Sequence pathways that he knew of.

As he was only an official Nighthawk, there was still a lot of information that he couldn't access. He was still in the dark about the names of the Mid to High Sequences and their corresponding traits. He only knew about the few that he had learned of from the Eternal Blazing Sun, such as the Priest of Light and the Unshadowed; the God of Combat Sequence pathway that he found out from the young man, Sun, such as Dawn Paladin, Guardian, and Demon Hunter; as well as Spirit Guide and Gatekeeper which he found out from Daly and Dunn.

Hence, it was difficult for him to judge which Sequence pathway would be a synonym of war. He could only eliminate them one by one, such as the God of Combat Sequence pathway which seemed more like individual battles rather than war.

Klein thought about it and minimized the scope to five options.

First, was the Arbiter Sequence pathway which the Loen Kingdom's ruler, the Augustus family, and the Feynapotter Kingdom's Castiya family were in control of. But Klein felt that this option was the least likely because the Arbiter's corresponding Sequence 8 was Sheriff and Sequence 7 was Interrogator, which both seemed to be leaning towards trial and judgment but not towards war.

Second, was the Fourth Epoch Solomon Empire's pathway of the Dark Emperor. Its Sequence 9's modern name was Lawyer, which was good at

discovering and using the flaws and weaknesses of an opponent, while also possessing outstanding eloquence and logical thinking. That was the second lowest possible Sequence pathway. He suspected that the development of the Sequence would make use of rules and walked in the shadow of order. Of course, war was also considered as one of the shadows of order.

Third, was the Hunter Sequence pathway that was in the control of the Feysac Empire's rulers, the Einhorn family; the Intis Republic's former royal family, the Sauron family, and also the hidden organization that only appeared in the last two to three hundred years, the Iron and Blood Cross Order. Klein thought it was quite possible.

The Nighthawk's confidential information described Hunters as excellent trackers, outstanding trap masters, and superb hunters. The corresponding Sequence 8 was Provoker, while Sequence 7 was Pyromaniac. Both were partially associated with massacre and war.

Fourth was the ancient organization Blood Sanctify Sect that worshiped demons. They were in control of the Criminal Sequence pathway. From the sequence title itself, Klein felt that it had a high possibility.

Fifth was the Rose School of Thought that was known for bloody rituals. They had the Prisoner Sequence pathway, and the reason was the same as the one before.

Just as Klein was drowning in his own thoughts, the scene before him changed. Madam Sharon had just finished showering, and her wet hair hung low. There was a fresh yet seductive charm on her face.

I can't see the woman in the white robe that turned Madam Sharon into a Demoness… It might be because my psychic ability is still lacking… Klein reined back his thoughts and redirected his attention to what was before his eyes.

Madam Sharon flipped her hair, and water droplets glided down her cheeks.

She looked towards the man who was waiting on the bed as she giggled and said, "Do you need me to take care of Maynard?"

The middle-aged man on the bed creased his eyebrows and shook his head. "Not unless you can guarantee that there won't be any traces left behind. But that's impossible; besides, what means do you have?"

Looking at the man before him, Klein was taken aback at first before suddenly feeling that it was within expectations.

The middle-aged man's photo often appeared on the front page of the Tingen City Honest Paper and other newspapers. He was the current mayor that was looking to be re-elected, a member of Conservative Party.

Madam Sharon smiled but didn't delve deeper into the topic. Her robe was halfway up her legs, and she walked gracefully to the side of the bed.

The scenery before him changed one after another until Klein saw many Members of Parliament, businessmen, and civil servants who appeared on the newspaper occasionally.

They would either discuss how to receive donations, bribe voters by going around the Campaign Act, or promise protection and solve problems. In the entire development, Madam Sharon acted as a broker.

This is actually a documentary, right… "Tour the Upper Circles of Tingen with Madam Sharon"… Well, but why are there so many bed scenes… Many nobles and Members of Parliament knew that Madam Sharon had many lovers, so why did they look like they couldn't resist the temptation… Was this an ability of Madam Sharon's Sequence? Klein watched thoughtfully as he speculated.

Through the divination earlier, he was certain that none of the guys in Tingen's upper circles knew of Madam Sharon's true identity, nor did they collude with her to murder Maynard.

In other words, Maynard's death was Madam Sharon's own decision? Why? She had no reason to take the risk.

Of course, from Madam Sharon's perspective, she possessed the Beyonder power to interfere in divination, and she could also create a sudden death from sexual pleasure and make the death appear natural and accidental. Killing Maynard wasn't something risky that would expose her identity, but she clearly lacks a motive. It doesn't match the risk involved!

Could it be one of the requirements of her "acting?" But she could definitely find someone whose identity and status wasn't as sensitive. Then, the case wouldn't have fallen to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind.

The most important point was that Madam Sharon should've been able to tell that Maynard's wife hated her and was extremely indignant. That made it highly likely that someone would be sent to investigate her, so why didn't she move those sensitive items like the white bone statue away? She could have buried it in the garden or something.

Was she so confident in the security of her safe and its hidden compartment?

Amidst his suspicion, Klein saw that Madam Sharon's spirit had yet to disperse. He seized the opportunity to do another dream divination.

This time, his divination involved: "Madam Sharon's true motive for killing John Maynard."

After he recited it in silence, Klein entered a dream once again and saw a new scene.

Madam Sharon held a glass of red wine which resembled blood. In her loose sleeping gown, she was pacing back and forth in her room. Finally, she drank the rest of the wine in one gulp, as though she had decided on something.

The scene dispersed quickly, leaving Klein even more confused since Maynard's death looked like Madam Sharon had volunteered to do it without anyone's instigation.

"That's weird…" Klein muttered to himself and used another few divination statements. But the answers were no different.

Seeing that Madam Sharon was growing transparent and illusory, signifying that she was going to disappear soon, Klein thought and made final contact with the dead spirit.

"Sequence potion formula of the Demoness pathway.

"Sequence potion formula of the Demoness pathway."

…

Klein recited the new divination statement. With the aid of Cogitation, he got into his dream very quickly.

At first, he didn't want to do the divination because he felt that the Demoness pathway only spread disaster and created pain. Even if he obtained a corresponding potion formula, he was unwilling to sell it to anyone and indirectly become a murderer.

Then, he recalled another matter from before. With his understanding of the Spectator potion, he had been able to suspect and verify that Daxter Guderian was a member of the Psychology Alchemists.

So, in order to better fight against the Demonesses in the future, he'd to learn more of the traits of their Sequence pathway.

Yes, after Hood Eugen's death, Daxter Guderian has yet to contact me. I'm guessing the Psychology Alchemists sent some stronger members for an investigation, and he hasn't dared to make any moves… As Klein's thoughts

flashed, he saw the dark hall again. He saw the woman in the holy white robe again.

Madam Sharon hung her head low, and she could only see the other woman's legs, a pair of flawless legs.

Soon, she heard a melodious voice.

"Pleasure, that is the name of the Sequence 6 potion, the goal that you are about to advance to. If you succeed, you'll be a Demoness of Pleasure.

"When pleasure is irresistible and impossible to break away from, it's a form of agony. This is also a maxim that you have to live by.

"As long as you complete your advancement, besides the enhancement of your various abilities as a Witch, you'll also become more beautiful, making you better at seduction and providing unforgettable pleasure to the same or opposite sex during love-making. You'll be able to make strange threads like a spider and utilize them."

Immediately following that, an ancient silver book appeared before Madam Sharon. After it was opened, there was the formula and ingredients placed separately.

"Main ingredients: A pair of Succubus eyes, an adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland.

"Supplementary ingredients: 100 ml of purified water, 5 drops of Black Jimsonweed juice, the complete remnants of a Succubus's hair, 10 grams of Feynapotter Fly Powder, and 5 grams of real Mummy ashes."

The scene changed again. It was the same hall, the same long white robe, and the same woman with indistinguishable features. But now, the difference was that Madam Sharon had returned to her original state. She was now the young man in the picture from before.

A melodious female voice reverberated in his ears.

"This is the name of the Sequence 7 potion, I'm sure you're surprised."

"Yes, I still can't believe it's called Witch!" "Madam Sharon" said in a rather agitated manner.

"Remember, if we want to get closer to the Primordial, we have to be more and more like 'Her.' She's a woman, so we have to be women too," The melodious female voice replied. "Either you give up or you accept. After you become a Witch, you'll become a true woman, and your appearance and charm will be enhanced substantially. You'll have the ability to turn invisible and use substitutes. You'll gain a rudimentary mastery of various dark magic, you'll be skilled at disrupting the divination of others, and you'll also gain the favor of the black flame and icy frost.

"The main ingredients are every drop of an Abyss Demonic Fish's blood and an Agate Peacock's egg.

"The supplementary ingredients are 80 ml of purified water, five drops of Jimsonweed juice, 3 scales of a Shadow Lizard, and 10 drops of Daffodil Juice."

…

Scenes continued to play, one after another, and Klein saw the Instigator and Assassin formula and understood their corresponding traits.

Just as he wanted to continue the divination, Madam Sharon's spirit dispersed completely.

Klein stopped the ritual and returned to reality. He packed up the ingredients, removed the wall of spirituality, and told Dunn Smith about the outcome of his mediumship without holding back any information. Then, he expressed his suspicions on Madam Sharon's murder of Maynard.

"Pleasure doesn't require her to kill anyone of a higher rank or position in society… Hmm, we need to investigate where Madam Sharon has been over the past few years and understand her origins. We need to look for the dark hall that you saw. Of course, this will need to be reported to the Holy Cathedral, and they can assign investigators accordingly. We can't leave Tingen as we wish." Dunn nodded slightly and looked around. He said, "Go to the first floor, check if those servants are still in deep sleep. If anyone is awake, bring them over and make them sign a confidentiality contract as per protocol. I'll be in charge of the second floor."

He found a black cloth and covered the Sealed Artifact 3-0271.

Upon hearing that, Klein suddenly understood why the intense battle hadn't brought the servants over—the Captain had sent them into a deep sleep from the very beginning.

Klein's body was still cold and stiff. He had to slow down and move forward in very, very light steps.

When he passed the bedroom door, he extended his hand and pulled out the two Tarot cards at the door. He wiped them and put them back into his pocket.

After he left the room, he walked towards the stairway.

After taking a few steps, he suddenly thought of a question—how would he make sure that the person was in a deep sleep?

Check with divination one by one? That'd be troublesome… The Captain is a Nightmare; he should be an expert in this. I'll have to ask him if he has any fast and simple methods.

With this in mind, Klein turned around walked towards the bedroom door, step by step, as he fought against the cold and stiffness in his body.

Before he came close, he looked through the ajar door and saw the shattered pieces of the angled full-body mirror.

There were still large shards of the mirror clinging to the frame, all the size of a palm.

In the cracked mirror, Dunn Smith, in his black windbreaker, was kneeling beside Kenley's dead body, doing something.

Suddenly, he lifted his head. His gray eyes were deep, and the corners of his lips were tainted with crimson blood.

Crimson blood.

Without thinking, Klein turned around, left the side of the door, and leaned his back against the wall.

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